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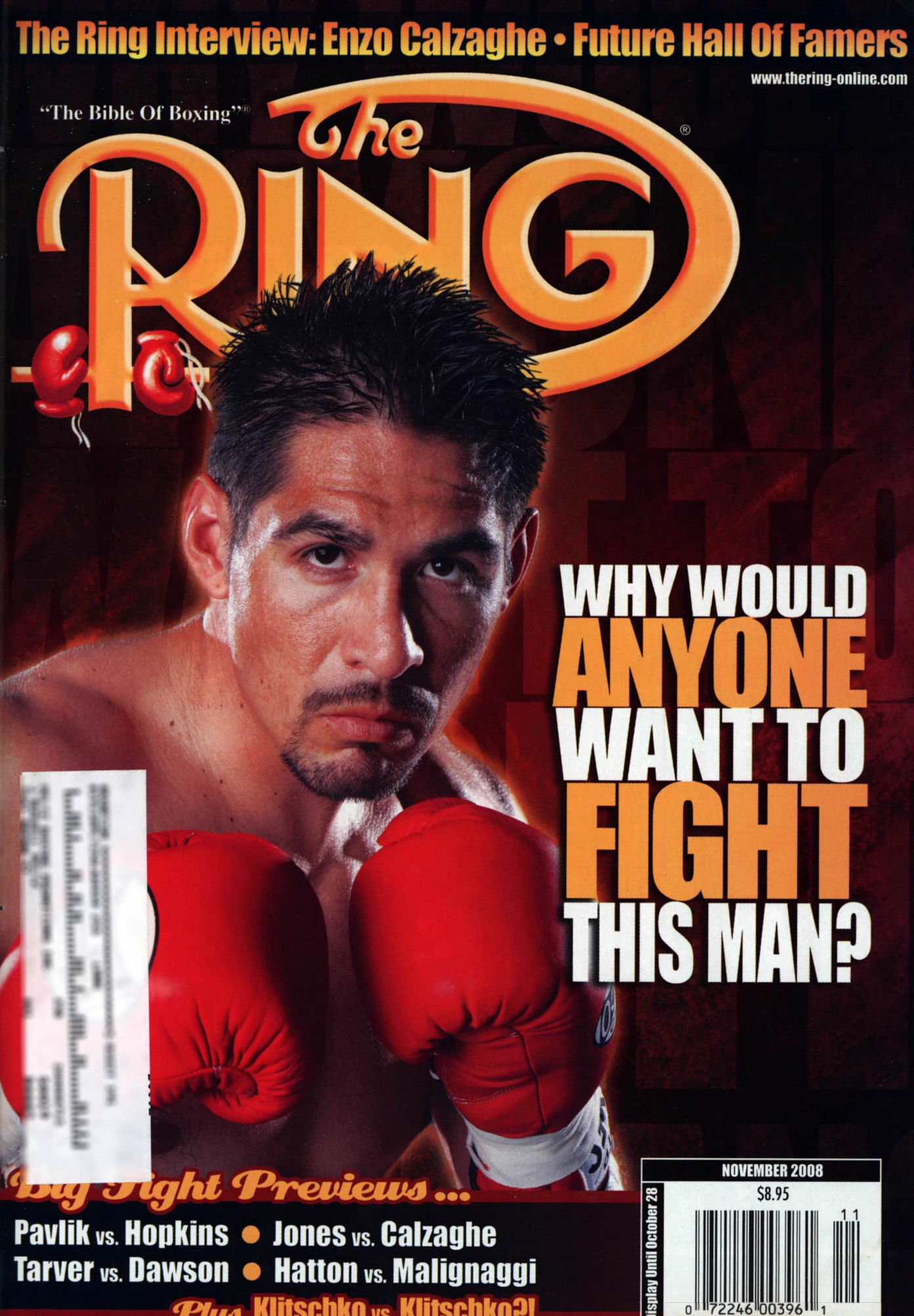

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Volume 87, No. 13 November 2008

The RING

A Worthy Superfight

While some members of the media are wringing their hands in anguish over the upcoming Oscar De La Hoya-Manny Pacquiao superfight, I am rubbing mine together in gleeful anticipation.

The dissenters argue that it is a physical mismatch and that Oscar is taking the easy way out by picking on a little guy.

They have the "little guy" part right, but I'm not so sure how "easy" it's going to be.

Pacquiao isn't exactly going to the guillotine on December 6; he's going to fight a man who will most likely outweigh him by around 10 pounds when the opening bell rings. Moreover, Pac-Man is at the height of his powers. De La Hoya is not.

You could make the case that it is actually Oscar who is taking the bigger risk. In his most recent bout, De La Hoya suffered a broken facial bone fighting Stevie Forbes, a light puncher whose best years were spent at 130 pounds. Imagine what would have happened if it had been Pacquiao landing those punches.

Pacquiao's trainer, Freddie Roach, has clearly thought about it, and come to the conclusion that Manny will beat Oscar. And you can't accuse him of simply looking for a big payday. When negotiations bogged down over money, Roach offered to forgo his fee if Pacquiao were to lose.

A lot of folks wanted De La Hoya to fight Antonio Margarito. I suspect most of them are Fernando Vargas fans.

Margarito is a hot fighter coming off the biggest victory of his career, and that's why he's on the cover of the magazine you're holding. But he's not yet a legend like Pacquiao and De La Hoya, and the risk of fighting him far outweighs the possible reward.

Or, to put it another way: Are you crazy?

Besides, I don't see what all the whining is about in the fist place. Providing nothing bad happens between now and the first week in December, boxing fans are in for a helluva ride.

Special fighters do special things, and that's what De La Hoya-Pacquiao is all about, two of the most popular and accomplished boxers of our generation getting it on in a fight that presents unique challenges for both of them.

What's not to like?

***

Until ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* featured former U.S. Olympians as studio guests during the month of August, I'd forgotten how good Olympic boxing used to be. *FNF* started out with Mark Breland and Howard Davis Jr., and by the time they got to Michael and Leon Spinks, I was looking forward to those old highlights more than that night's live main event.

But somewhere along the way all the life and fun has been sucked out of Olympic boxing, and it's gotten to the point where watching is a painful experience. And not just because the U.S. team was the worst in Olympic history. In the main, the contests were flailing affairs, featuring almost as much grabbing as punching, and decided by a scoring system that I believe was invented by Max Headroom.

Next issue, regular contributor David Mayo, who wrote THE RING's Olympic preview, will be detailing not only the Beijing Games, but also the problems with amateur boxing in the United States and what measures need to be taken to improve the situation.

It's unlikely that things will ever return to the way they were when the Spinks brothers were bringing home the gold, but we have to do better than this. The future of boxing in this country could very well depend on it.

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[Opening Shot]

A New Fight Injury: Cramped Writing Hand

When we're kids, we're told to write our names on the chalkboard 100 times as punishment; when you're middleweight champion of the world, writing your name on 100 boxing gloves is just another day at the office. The look on Kelly Pavlik's face suggests he wouldn't have minded a room with a few less mitts in it. But when you stop by the HBO office, and when HBO has the deepest pockets in boxing, you just suck it up and keep signing.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA-TOP RANK

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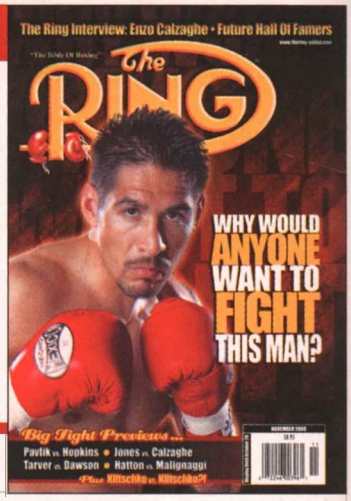

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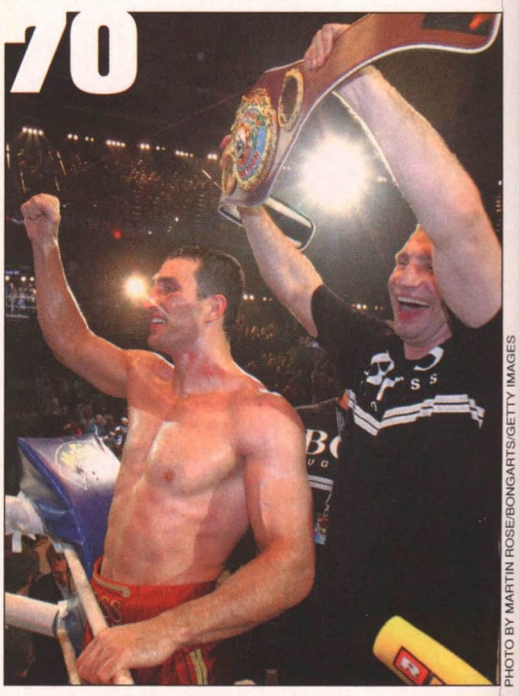

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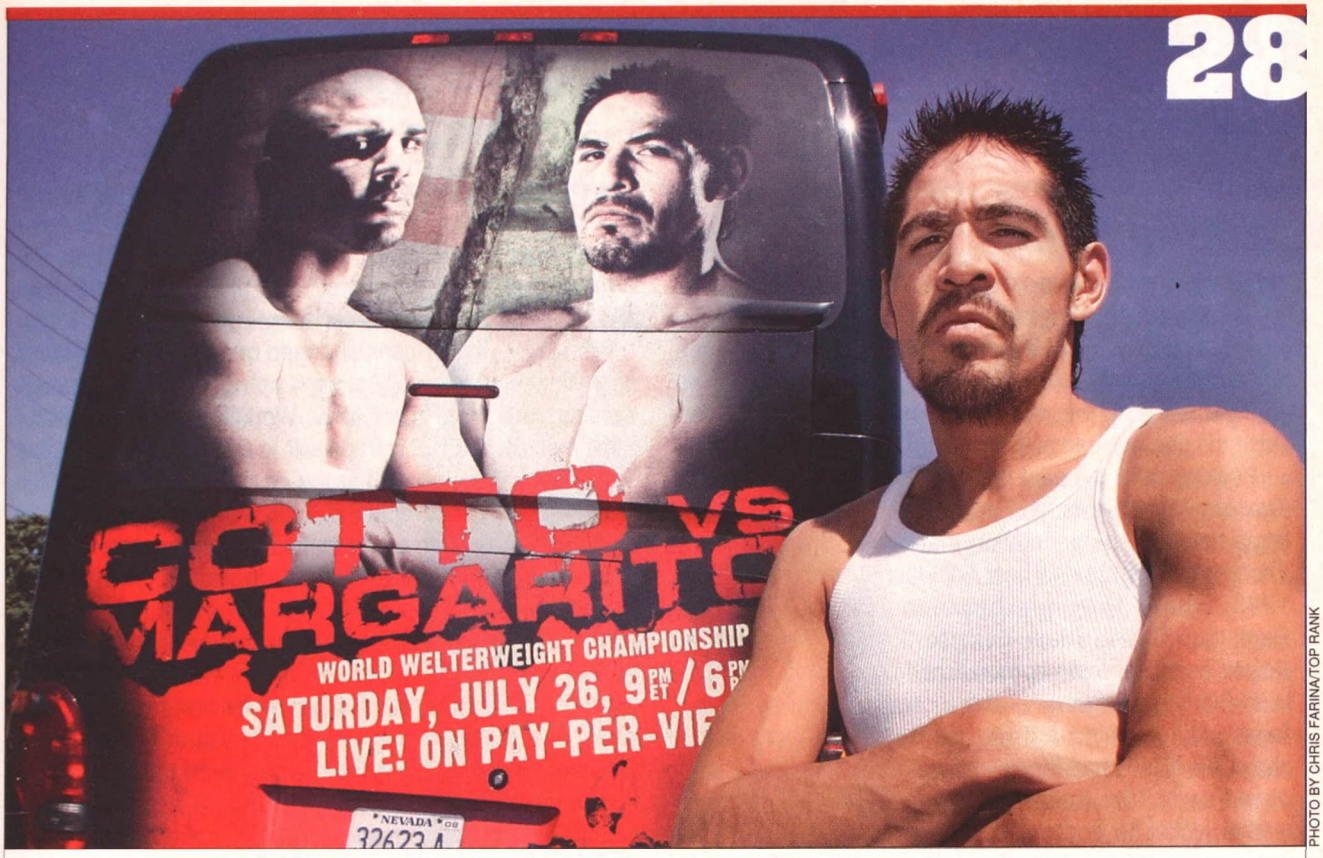

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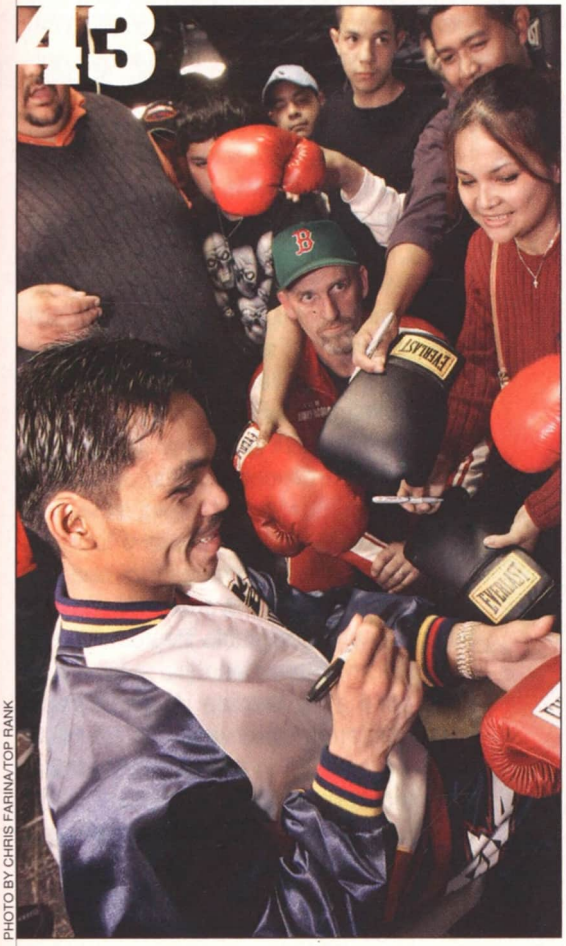

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

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Friday Night Fights Turns 10

Has it really been 10 years? When ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* began celebrating its 10th anniversary season back on December 28, 2007, it hadn't been; but around the time this magazine hits the newsstands, we'll be reaching the *real* anniversary, marking 10 years since the first episode of *FNF*.

Seeking to fill the void left by the cancellation of USA's *Tuesday Night Fights*, and also seeking to tweak the nostalgia nerve of the generation that grew up with Gillette's *Friday Night Fights*, the new *FNF* launched on October 2, 1998, with a live fight between Thomas Tate and Demetrius Davis, a tape-delayed fight between Andrew Golota and Tim Witherspoon, a half-hour of old fight films from Bill Cayton's library, and a couple of not-so-familiar faces sitting behind a desk. *FNF* gave boxing a studio show, like ESPN had for so many other sports, and it introduced us to Max Kellerman (who can forget that black leather jacket he wore on the premiere?) and Brian Kenny (who knew there was a *SportsCenter* talking head who actually appreciated boxing?).

"I thought from the very start that we had a chance to be a big part of the boxing landscape," Kenny told THE RING. "We were at the time, and still are, the only boxing news and information show on television."

The formats and faces changed over the years. The old fight films were gradually phased out. Teddy Atlas' strategy sessions morphed from "Atlas' World" to the "Fight Plan." Blow-by-blow man Bob Papa left in 2002, replaced by Joe Tessitore. Kellerman split at the end of 2003 (and "To The Max" left with him), replaced by a revolving door of guest studio co-hosts. With a different partner every week, Kenny shined, showing there was no degree of difficulty he couldn't handle.

"It has been wonderful getting to know all the top fighters in the world as they come to spend the day with me in Bristol," Kenny said. "But I think my fondest memory of the show was getting to be close friends with Max Kellerman. Getting to know Teddy Atlas is also one of the great benefits to the show. He is a true friend, and a man who has your back in a crisis."

Throughout this 10th season, *FNF* has revealed nominees for its best fight, best knockout, and best fighter, allowing fans to vote. In the knockout category, Edison Miranda's cartoonish kayo of David Banks edged out Darnell Wilson's cringe-worthy vaporizing of Emanuel Nwodo. For best fight, Micky Ward-Emanuel Burton, the only *FNF* contest to be named RING Fight of the Year, was an obvious winner (though we're puzzled as to how Ward-Reggie Green and Tate-Merqui Sosa were left off the list of nominees).

PHOTO COURTESY OF ESPN COMMUNICATIONS

Kenny and studio guest Joe Frazier

Nominees for best fighter were still being rolled out as this magazine went to press, with Ward, Burton/Augustus, Vinny Paz, Sam Peter, and Zab Judah among them. Those were the type of fighters who defined the first decade of *FNF*: a mix of entertaining veterans keeping busy while they waited for HBO and Showtime to come calling, and up-and-comers who would eventually become premium-cable staples. For the fighters, *FNF* has been like a farm system for the big leagues. And with Papa and Kellerman both working for HBO now, it's served in that capacity for the broadcasters as well.

But for the fans, *FNF* has simply become the way we kick off our weekends—for 10 years and counting.

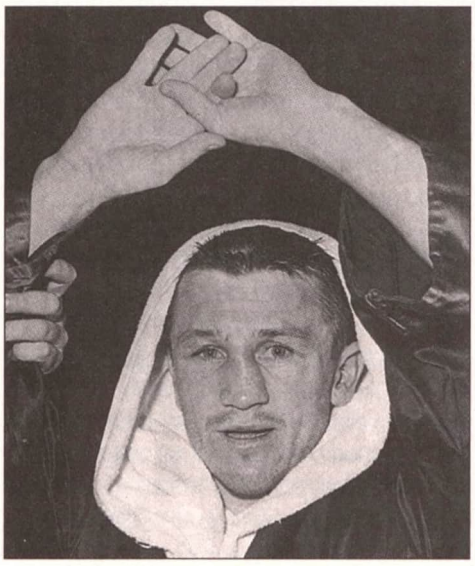
—Eric Raskin

Kenny Lane, 1932-2008

From 1955-'65, Kenny Lane was a crew cut, slick-boxing, perennially top-ranked lightweight who lost two tries for the 135-pound title by decision to Joe Brown and Carlos Ortiz, respectively (and a shot at the just-resurrected junior welterweight crown against Ortiz). In addition to them, Lane fought world champions Paddy DeMarco, Ralph Dupas, Virgil Atkins, Carlos Hernandez, Curtis Cokes, and Eddie Perkins, and was a popular performer on the televised weekly fights of that era.

For all that, the slick Michigan southpaw (thanks to whom Brown made the famous remark after their very close 1958 title match that all lefties "ought to be taken to the river and drowned") made a much bigger splash in 1982, when the 50-year-old Lane embarked on a ring comeback that drew global attention (four years before Grandpa Foreman did it), winning three bouts and losing one.

Incredibly, when he was 64, Lane briefly considered "doing some more fighting again before I get too old," and went back into serious training. But his enthusiasm for tacking more fights onto his 82-16-2 (19) record wasn't contagious on the home front ("You know how wives are," he said. "Behind every successful man there's a surprised wife") and elsewhere ("It's hard to get anybody enthusiastic about an up-and-coming 64-year-old"), and he reluctantly shelved the notion.



Lane celebrates 1963 victory over Paulie Armstead

But Lane continued training and tutoring young fighters at the Muskegon Recreation Center, and the 76-year-old wizard even sparred with one of them there the night before Lane suffered a fatal heart attack on a Muskegon golf course on August 5.

Lane's home state of Michigan erroneously conferred its own version of the world lightweight title on him in 1964. The World Boxing Hall of Fame was on firmer ground when the stylish craftsman was enshrined as a member in 2004.

—Pete Ehrmann

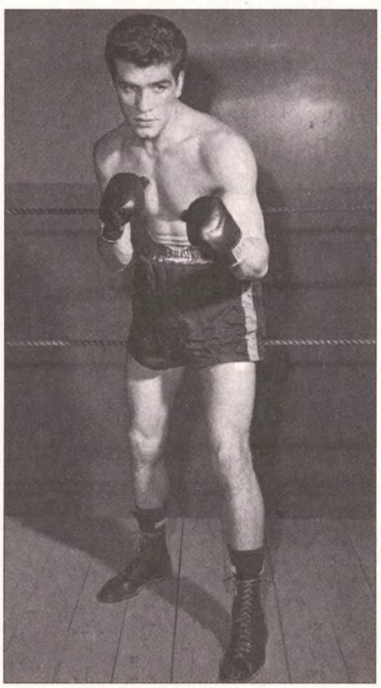
Joe Miceli, 1929-2008

As TVs began lighting up like fireflies in the early-1950s and boxing became a staple of the burgeoning new medium, college champion Chuck Davey was handpicked as the sport's new poster boy to give boxing the kind of wholesome and respectable image that would draw in viewers. Davey was steered to a 1953 title fight against 147-pound champion Kid Gavilan and was destroyed.

Davey's glossy media campaign made other good fighters of that era grind their teeth. Including a tough Brooklyn left-hooker named Joe Miceli, who once asked, "What's all the fuss about Davey? I'll fight him anywhere, anytime, and knock him out. You can name the round too."

Miceli never did fight Davey, but with that attitude and the weird hook that was thrown like an uppercut, he became a popular prime-time performer in boxing's initial television era, and his death on July 19 at age 79 removed another link to a time when, for all the operators running it, boxing had an abundance of honorable and worthy craftsmen.

Thirty-seven of Miceli's 110 fights were on the tube, but even more impressive is that, while he never got to fight for a championship, Miceli did fight 12 world champions and many of the top lightweight, welterweight, and middleweight contenders up to his retirement in 1961 with a record of 60-42-8 (28). He beat lightweight champion Ike Williams in two out of three fights, drew with Joey Giardello, and lost a controversial decision to Kid Gavilan.



Miceli in his prime as a popular TV fighter

There was nothing illusory about Miceli—"A fighting man who can take it as well as dish it out," said columnist Lloyd Larsen of the *Milwaukee Sentinel* after Miceli upset Williams in their 1950 non-title fight. That was right before Miceli went into the U.S. Army, and when Larsen also called him "the type [America] needs to protect all of us against the best that would-be world conquerors can put on the field and sea and in the air," he perfectly summed up what makes this 1950s contender and his ilk seem even more compelling and admirable as time goes by.

—Pete Ehrmann

TV Fights of the Month

Compiled By Martin Mulcahey

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
7/18/08	Tomas Villa KO 4 Gilberto Leon *Villa is becoming Telefutura's most exciting house fighter*	Telef	f	B-	C+	B+
7/18/08	Yuriorkis Gamboa KO 1 Al Seeger *Mismatch ends as expected*	ESPN2	f	B-	B	C
7/23/08	Jose Santa Cruz KO 5 Miguel Munguia *Bodyshot drops Munguia into fetal position*	ESPN2	l	B+	C-	C
7/23/08	Jeff Lacy W 10 Epifanio Mendoza *Will Lacy ever have another easy fight?*	ESPN2	sm	B+	B	B-
7/25/08	Jesus Soto Karass KO 8 David Estrada *Lanky Karass keeps Estrada on the end of his punches*	Telef	w	B-	B	B-
7/25/08	James McGirt Jr. W 10 Raymond Joval *McGirt rebounds well following maiden loss*	ESPN2	sm	C+	B	B-
7/26/08	Bernabe Concepcion KO 3 Adam Carrera *Freddie Roach is becoming a Pied Piper of Filipino talent*	PPV	jf	B-	C+	C+
7/26/08	Mike Alvarado KO 4 Cesar Bazan *Stopping washed-up Bazan proves little*	PPV	jw	B-	B-	C
7/26/08	Cesar Canchila W 12 Giovanni Segura *Relentless Colombian survives early knockdown to wear down Segura*	PPV	jfl	B-	B	B
7/26/08	Antonio Margarito KO 11 Miguel Cotto *"Tijuana Tornado" blows away Cotto*	PPV	w	A	A+	A
7/30/08	Sebastian Lujan W 10 Jose Castillo *Punches thrown tells the story: Lujan 1,208, Castillo 530*	ESPN2	w	B-	C	C
8/01/08	David Lopez KO 5 Billy Lyell *13-year pro has done enough to warrant a title shot*	Telef	m	B-	C	C+
8/01/08	Jhonny Gonzalez KO 1 Leivi Brea *The worst mismatch for Telefutura in 2008*	Telef	jf	C	D-	D
8/01/08	Ishe Smith W 10 Pawel Wolak *Uppercuts made Wolak look like a human bobblehead doll*	Show	jm	B-	B-	C
8/01/08	Adonis Stevenson KO 1 Anthony Bonsante *Bonsante plays possum and referee waves the fight over*	ESPN2	sm	B-	C	C-
8/01/08	Dionisio Miranda W 10 Sebastien Demers *Finally, a reason to mention judges in a positive light*	ESPN2	m	B-	B	B
8/02/08	Andre Dirrell KO 4 Mike Paschall *Geyser of a cut makes for bloody finish*	Show	sm	B-	C	C+
8/02/08	Vic Darchinyan KO 5 Dimitri Kirilov *Anyone else think Darchinyan looks like a really angry Charles Manson?*	Show	jb	B+	B+	B
8/02/08	Joshua Clottey Tech W 9 Zab Judah *Is Clottey the most physically powerful counterpuncher of the last decade?*	HBO	w	A-	A	B+
8/06/08	Ali Oubaali KO 8 Christopher Fernandez *Oubaali is the most aggressive thing out of France since Napoleon*	ESPN2	jw	C+	C+	C+
8/08/08	Jose Lopez KO 7 Oscar Andrade *A record for most low blows absorbed without retaliation?*	Telef	b	B+	C+	C
8/08/08	Tavoris Cloud KO 10 Julio Gonzalez *This Cloud is packed with thunder and lightning*	ESPN2	lh	B-	B	B-
8/13/08	Joe Greene W 12 Jose Torres *Frontrunner for Sandy Saddler-Willie Pep dirty fight award*	ESPN2	jm	C+	C+	C+
8/13/08	Joel Julio KO 6 Jose Varela *Fifth knockdown convinces referee to stop fight between rounds*	ESPN2	jm	B-	C	C+
8/15/08	Carlos Hernandez W 10 Hector Alatorre *Comebacking ex-titlist has hard time shaking ring rust and opponent*	Telef	jw	B-	C+	C+
8/15/08	Ola Afolabi W 8 DeLeon Tinsley *If Afolabi were any more relaxed in a ring, he would need a bed*	ESPN2	c	C+	C+	C+
8/15/08	Ishmail Arvin KO 6 Anthony Thompson *Confused DC commission views and ignores replay evidence of headbutt*	ESPN2	jm	C+	C+	F

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(RING championship fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox Sports Net;Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo

Boxing Bookshelf

Though Sugar Ray Leonard's 1987 upset of Marvelous Marvin Hagler for the world middleweight crown is one of the most talked-about and controversial decisions in boxing history, no book has ever been written focusing primarily on that fight—until now. Steve Marantz' new book, *Sorcery At Caesars: Sugar Ray's Marvelous Fight* (222 pages, $19.95, Inkwater Press) is the first attempt at the subject and a very good one.

Marantz details the lives and careers of both fighters, from their beginnings up to and just after their famous contest at Las Vegas' Caesars Palace on April 5, 1987. The author's account of the psyches of both fighters during their careers, as well as for their matchup, is simultaneously informative and an easy read.

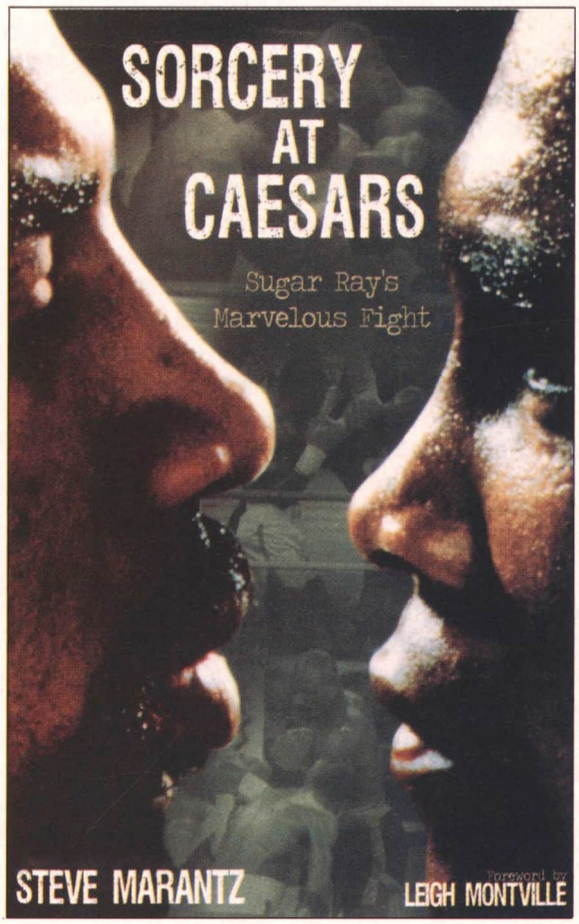
While the reader may be a little suspicious of Marantz' background as a Boston newspaper reporter as it applies to his mostly negative descriptions of Leonard's career-long salesmanship and attention to image over substance, one must keep in mind that just because Marantz is from Hagler territory does not mean he is not correct in his revelations on Leonard's hypocrisies and other faults.

Just to make sure the story is not a one-sided tale, Marantz recounts how the chip on Hagler's shoulder before and after he became champion motivated him throughout his career choices, but also reveals how Hagler allegedly let cocaine get the best of him after his momentous win over Thomas Hearns. For the readers who may not have heard this beforehand, it is a rather startling discovery, considering how Spartan Hagler treated training camp. Hagler would have been one of the last people one would have expected to fall prey to the white powder.

Marantz is at his best when writing about the whole process of psychological gamesmanship Leonard used on Hagler in the months leading up to their bout, as well as during it. And his narrative regarding the scoring of the fight, with numerous notables (including the judges) giving their opinions on what they saw and why, only serves to keep the controversy going after all these years. The author tends to agree with many that Leonard stole the victory, and his evidence is not inconsequential. After finishing the book, the reader can't help but come away with less respect for Leonard as a person.

But no matter how one feels about the verdict or how they feel about the participants, *Sorcery At Caesars* is definitely a worthy read.

—Mike Greenhill

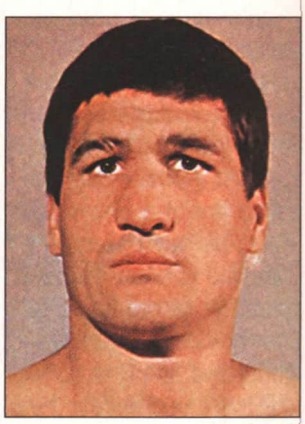


Outside the Ropes

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Lathan: New NYSAC boss

Longtime boxing judge **Melvina Lathan** will replace **Ron Scott Stevens** as the head of the New York State Athletic Commission when Stevens' term expires in January 2009 ... **Oscar De La Hoya** has been inducted into the United States Olympic Hall of Fame. De La Hoya won a gold medal at the 1992 Games, capping an incredible 223-5 amateur career ... **Beau Williford**, head coach of the Ragin' Cajun Boxing Club in Lafayette, Louisiana, has been named Commissioner of Boxing for the 2009 Governor's Games. USA Boxing, the national governing body for amateur boxing, will sanction the event ... World light heavyweight and super middleweight champion **Joe Calzaghe** has countersued his former promoter, **Frank Warren**, for $4-million Calzaghe claims he is still owed for his April 19 fight with **Bernard Hopkins**. Warren is suing Calzaghe for breach of contract ... **Don King** lost the $2.5-billion libel lawsuit he had filed against **Walt Disney Co.** King claimed that ESPN, the all-sports cable-TV network owned by Disney, acted with malice in a 2004 installment of ESPN's *Sports Century* series in which the promoter was featured. However, Florida State Court Judge **Robert A. Rosenberg** ruled that ESPN "was not required to continue its investigation until it found somebody who would defend the plaintiff." King plans to appeal the decision ... The family of **Vunies High**, the sister of **Joe Louis**, has filed a federal lawsuit against **Capital Senior Living Properties Corp.**, which operates the senior living facilities where High (who suffered from Alzheimer's disease) resided at the time of her death in February '08. The lawsuit alleges negligence led to her death when she wandered outdoors and died of hypothermia ... Junior welterweight champion **Ricky Hatton** has ended his 11-year partnership with trainer **Billy Graham**. Hatton claimed that Graham had retired, but the trainer said he was "sacked" and that it was a "huge blow" ... British lightweight contender **Amir Khan** has hired **Jorge Rubio** as his new trainer. Rubio, a former coach with the Cuban national amateur team, is also currently working with unbeaten featherweight prospect and 2004 Olympic champion **Yuriorkis Gamboa** ... New York junior welterweight **Edgar Santana**, 29, was arrested in July for allegedly participating in a major cocaine transaction. Santana, 24-3 (15), pleaded not guilty. In his most recent bout prior to the arrest, Santana won a 10-round decision over **Josesito Lopez** on April 11 ... Boxing coach **Marvin Johnson** (no relation to former WBC/WBA light heavyweight titleholder) has been charged with sexually assaulting a 12-year-old girl he met through his position at the Boys and Girls Club in Vineland, New Jersey. The charges stem from an investigation prompted by a report to the state welfare authorities, claiming that Johnson had sexually assaulted children involved in the club. "We are investigating to see if there were other victims involved," said Cumberland County Prosecutor **Ron Casella** ... Former Japanese middleweight titleholder **Takeshi Yamato**, 42, was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder following an altercation in a Tokyo sushi restaurant. According to police, Yamato threw multiple punches at the restaurant owner, butted him in the face, and tried to strangle him, causing injuries that hospitalized the victim. The former fighter, who became an actor after hanging up his gloves, was also accused of grabbing a knife from the restaurant and shouting that he wanted to stab the owner ... Former South African heavyweight titleholder **Mike "The Tank" Schutte**, 57, died of cancer on July 17 in Vanderbijlpark. Schutte, who compiled a pro record of 38-9-2 (28) between May 1971 and June '79, lost what is arguably the dirtiest fight ever seen in South Africa, when he was disqualified in the sixth round of his 1977 brawl with **Gerrie Coetzee** ... Popular San Francisco heavyweight **Pat Valentino**, 88, died on June 25. Valentino, who recorded a mark of 45-11-4 (21) during a pro career that began in 1939 and ended in '49, is best recalled for his final fight, when he was knocked out in the eighth round by then-heavyweight champion **Ezzard Charles** ... Former WBC light heavyweight titleholder **Mate Parlov**, 59, died of lung cancer on June 29 in his hometown of Pula, Croatia. Southpaw Parlov won the light heavyweight gold medal at the 1972 Olympic Games and turned pro in May 1975. He knocked out **Miguel Angel Cuello** to win the WBC 175-pound belt in July '78, made a successful defense against **John Conteh** (W 15), and then lost the title to **Marvin Johnson** in December '78. When the WBC created the cruiserweight division, Parlov was matched with **Marvin Camel** for the vacant title. Their bout ended in a 15-round draw, so they fought a rematch in March '80, and when Camel won a 15-round decision, Parlov retired with a record of 24-3-2 (12). ■



Parlov: Cancer victim

Quotable

"We promised you violence, and we gave you violence!"

—HBO blow-by-blow announcer Jim Lampley, during the Antonio Margarito-Miguel Cotto broadcast

"I've always been nuts."

—Former welterweight champion Ricardo Mayorga, summing up his personality at a press conference for his bout with Shane Mosley

[Ratings Analysis]

For Period Ended August 18, 2008

Heavyweights: No changes.
Cruiserweights: No changes.
Light Heavyweights: No changes.
Super Middleweights: No changes.
Middleweights: Winky Wright (third last issue) exits due to inactivity. Wright has not fought in more than a year, since losing a decision to Bernard Hopkins in July 2007, nor did he have a fight scheduled as this issue went to press. Wright's departure enables everyone rated four through seven last issue to move up one slot each. David Lopez (ninth last issue) and Raul Marquez (10th last issue) leap forward two spots each. James McGirt Jr. debuts at nine after decisioning Raymond Joval (eighth last issue), who departs, and Marco Antonio Rubio enters at 10.
Junior Middleweights: Joel Julio replaces Roman Karmazin at 10, due to Julio's greater activity.
Welterweights: Antonio Margarito (fourth last issue) forges to the top spot after stopping Miguel Cotto (first last issue), who sinks to three. Paul Williams (third last issue) rises to two, while Shane Mosley (second last issue) falls to four. Joshua Clottey (seventh last issue) advances to five after beating Zab Judah (sixth last issue), who falls to seven. Carlos Quintana (fifth last issue) slips to six.
Junior Welterweights: No changes.
Lightweights: No changes.
Junior Lightweights: The division will undergo major changes in September, when number-one rated Juan Manuel Marquez steps up to face lightweight world champion Joel Casamayor, and number-two rated Joan Guzman takes on number-one lightweight contender Nate Campbell. There is also a September clash within the division, as fifth-rated Jorge Barrios takes on 10th-rated Rocky Juarez.
Featherweights: No changes.
Junior Featherweights: No changes.
Bantamweights: No changes.
Junior Bantamweights: Vic Darchinyan (ninth last issue) jumps to four after stopping Dimitri Kirilov (sixth last issue), who falls to nine. Darchinyan's rise drops Nobuo Nashiro (fourth last issue) and Jorge Arce (fifth last issue) down one place each. Rafael Concepcion debuts at 10 after beating A.J. Banal (10th last issue), who exits.
Flyweights: No changes.
Junior Flyweights: Cesar Canchila debuts at two after upsetting Giovanni Segura (second last issue), who drops to three. Everyone from three to nine moves down one slot, nudging out Adrian Hernandez (10th last issue).
Strawweights: Juan Palacios debuts at nine after stopping Omar Soto (ninth last issue), who exits.
Pound-for-pound: Antonio Margarito debuts at six after beating Miguel Cotto (sixth last issue). Cotto now falls to 10, forcing out Ivan Calderon (10th last issue).

The RING
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

Pound-For-Pound

1. **Manny Pacquiao**
   Lightweight
2. **Joe Calzaghe**
   Super Middleweight/Light Heavyweight
3. **Juan Manuel Marquez**
   Junior Lightweight
4. **Bernard Hopkins**
   Light Heavyweight
5. **Israel Vazquez**
   Junior Featherweight
6. **Antonio Margarito**
   Welterweight
7. **Kelly Pavlik**
   Middleweight
8. **Cristian Mijares**
   Junior Bantamweight
9. **Rafael Marquez**
   Junior Featherweight
10. **Miguel Cotto**
    Welterweight

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to
TheRing-online.com

The Ring Ratings

For Period Ended August 18, 2008

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on "Ratings" at thering-online.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com.

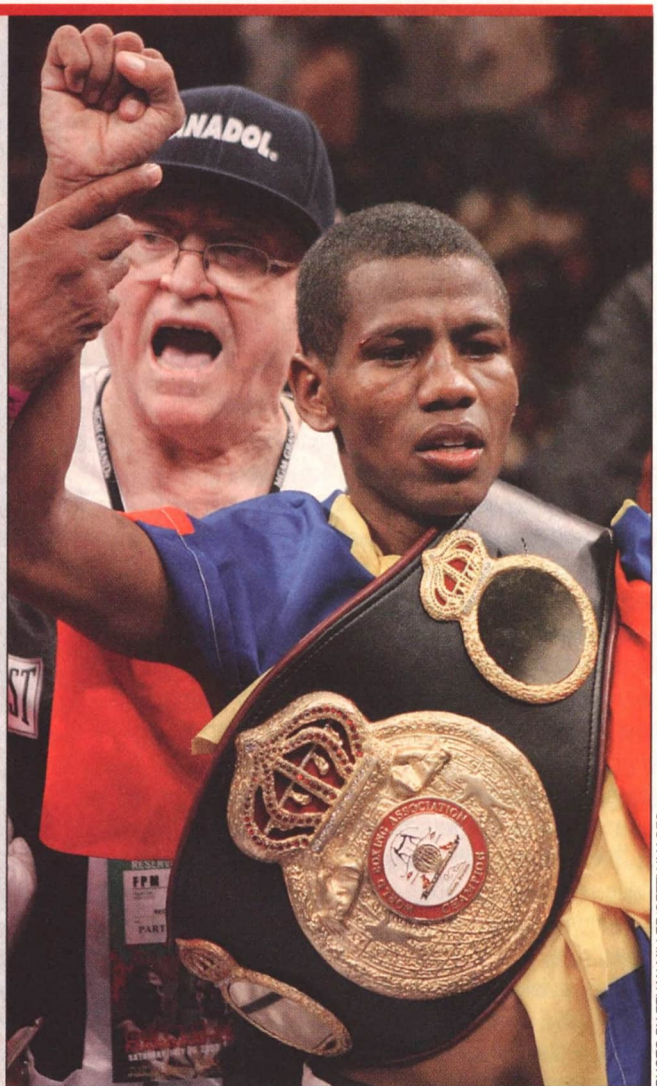


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Cesar Canchila debuts at junior flyweight after upsetting Giovanni Segura

Heavyweights

Weight Unlimited

Champ: Vacant

1. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 51-3 (45)
2. **SAMUEL PETER** Nigeria 30-1 (23)
3. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV** Uzbekistan 24-0-1 (17)
4. **NICOLAY VALUEV** Russia 48-1 (34)
5. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN** Russia 16-0 (12)
6. **SULTAN IBRAGIMOV** Russia 22-1-1 (17)
7. **OLEG MASKAEV** Kazakhstan 34-6 (26)
8. **VLADIMIR VIRCHIS** Ukraine 24-1 (20)
9. **JOHN RUIZ** Chelsea, MA 43-7-1 (29)
10. **CHRIS ARREOLA** Riverside, CA 24-0 (21)

Jr. Middleweights

Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VERNO PHILLIPS** Belize 42-10-1 (21)
2. **SERGIO MORA** Los Angeles, CA 21-0-1 (5)
3. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Los Angeles, CA 39-5 (30)
4. **VERNON FORREST** Atlanta, GA 40-3 (29)
5. **CORY SPINKS** St. Louis, MO 36-5 (11)
6. **ALEX BUNEMA** Dominican Republic 30-5-2 (16)
7. **DANIEL SANTOS** Puerto Rico 32-3-1 (23)
8. **JOACHIM ALCINE** Haiti 30-1 (19)
9. **SERGEI DZINZIRUK** Ukraine 35-0 (22)
10. **JOEL JULIO** Colombia 34-1 (31)

Featherweights

Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHRIS JOHN** Indonesia 41-0-1 (22)
2. **JORGE SOLIS** Mexico 35-1-2 (25)
3. **STEVEN LUEVANO** La Puente, CA 35-1-1 (15)
4. **HIROYUKI ENOKI** Japan 27-0-2 (19)
5. **JORGE LINARES** Venezuela 25-0 (16)
6. **MARIO SANTIAGO** Puerto Rico 19-1-1 (14)
7. **MARTIN HONORIO** Mexico 24-4-1 (12)
8. **NICKY COOK** England 28-1(16)
9. **TAKAHIRO AOH** Japan 16-0-1 (8)
10. **ORLANDO SALIDO** Mexico 31-9-2 (20)

Jr. Featherweights

Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: ISRAEL VAZQUEZ Mexico 43-4 (31)

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 37-5 (33)
2. **CELESTINO CABALLERO** Panama 29-2 (20)
3. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ** Puerto Rico 22-0 (20)
4. **STEVE MOLITOR** Canada 27-0 (10)
5. **POONSAWAT KRATINGAENGGYM** Thailand 35-1 (25
6. **SERGIO MANUEL MEDINA** Argentina 32-1 (17)
7. **TAKALANI NDLOVU** South Africa 28-4 (18)
8. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON** Mexico 34-2 (30)
9. **REY BAUTISTA** Philippines 25-1 (18)
10. **JHONNY GONZALEZ** Mexico 39-6 (33)

Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA** Japan 24-2 (8)
2. **ANSELMO MORENO** Panama 22-1-1 (8)
3. **WLADIMIR SIDORENKO** Ukraine 21-1-2 (7)
4. **SILENCE MABUZA** South Africa 22-2 (18)
5. **GERRY PENALOSA** Philippines 53-6-2 (36)
6. **JOSEPH AGBEKO** Ghana 25-1 (22)
7. **ABNER MARES** Mexico 17-0 (10)
8. **LUIS PEREZ** Nicaragua 25-2 (16)
9. **SASHA BAKHTIN** Russia 20-0 (9)
10. **VUSI MALINGA** South Africa 18-2-1 (11)

Cruiserweights
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM** Philadelphia, PA 21-1 (11)
2. **TOMASZ ADAMEK** Poland 35-1 (24)
3. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK** Guadeloupe 33-4 (22)
4. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK** Poland 41-2 (31)
5. **FIRAT ARSLAN** Germany 29-3-1 (18)
6. **O'NEIL BELL** Jamaica 26-3-1 (24)
7. **ENZO MACCARINELLI** Wales 28-2 (21)
8. **MARCO HUCK** Yugoslavia 21-1 (16)
9. **VADIM TOKAREV** Russia 24-1-1 (17)
10. **RUDOLF KRAJ** Czech Republic 14-0 (10)

Light Heavyweights
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: JOE CALZAGHE Wales 45-0 (32)

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS** Philadelphia, PA 48-5-1 (32)
2. **ANTONIO TARVER** Orlando, FL 27-4 (19)
3. **CHAD DAWSON** New Haven, CT 26-0 (17)
4. **GLEN JOHNSON** Jamaica 47-12-2 (32)
5. **ZSOLT ERDEI** Hungary 29-0 (17)
6. **ROY JONES** Pensacola, FL 52-4 (38)
7. **CLINTON WOODS** England 41-4-1 (24)
8. **ADRIAN DIACONU** Romania 25-0 (15
9. **CHRIS HENRY** Houston, TX 22-1 (18)
10. **HUGO GARAY** Argentina 31-3 (17)

Super Middleweights
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: JOE CALZAGHE Wales 45-0 (32)

1. **MIKKEL KESSLER** Denmark 40-1 (30)
2. **ANTHONY MUNDINE** Australia 33-3 (23)
3. **LUCIAN BUTE** Romania 22-0 (18)
4. **LIBRADO ANDRADE** Mexico 27-1 (21)
5. **JEFF LACY** St. Petersburg, FL 24-1 (17)
6. **CARL FROCH** England 23-0 (19)
7. **ALLAN GREEN** Tulsa, OK 26-1 (18)
8. **SAKIO BIKA** Cameroon 26-3-2 (16)
9. **DENIS INKIN** Russia 33-0 (24)
10. **JERMAIN TAYLOR** Little Rock, AR 27-2-1 (17)

Middleweights
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: KELLY PAVLIK Youngstown, OH 34-0 (30)

1. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM** Armenia 27-0 (22)
2. **FELIX STURM** Germany 30-2-1 (13)
3. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER** Germany 29-2 (14)
4. **AMIN ASIKAINEN** Finland 24-1 (16)
5. **RANDY GRIFFIN** Louisville, KY 24-2-3 (12)
6. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO** Spain 62-8 (43)
7. **DAVID LOPEZ** Mexico 36-12 (23)
8. **RAUL MARQUEZ** Mexico 41-3-1 (29)
9. **JAMES McGIRT JR.** Vero Beach, FL 19-1 (9)
10. **MARCO ANTONIO RUBIO** Mexico 42-4-1 (37)

Welterweights
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ANTONIO MARGARITO** Mexico 37-5 (27)
2. **PAUL WILLIAMS** Augusta, GA 34-1 (25)
3. **MIGUEL COTTO** Puerto Rico 32-1 (26)
4. **SHANE MOSLEY** Pomona, CA 44-5 (37)
5. **JOSHUA CLOTTEY** Ghana 35-2 (20)
6. **CARLOS QUINTANA** Puerto Rico 25-2 (19)
7. **ZAB JUDAH** Brooklyn, NY 36-6 (25)
8. **LUIS COLLAZO** Queens, NY 28-3 (13)
9. **JACKSON BONSU** Ghana 28-1 (23)
10. **ANDRE BERTO** Winter Haven, FL 22-0 (19)

Jr. Welterweights
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: RICKY HATTON England 44-1 (31)

1. **PAUL MALIGNAGGI** Brooklyn, NY 25-1 (5)
2. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY** Palm Springs, CA 22-0 (11)
3. **JUNIOR WITTER** England 36-2-2 (21)
4. **ANDREAS KOTELNIK** Ukraine 29-2-1 (13)
5. **HERMAN NGOUDJO** Cameroon 17-2 (9)
6. **KENDALL HOLT** Paterson, NJ 24-2 (13)
7. **RICARDO TORRES** Colombia 32-2 (28)
8. **JUAN URANGO** Colombia 20-1-1 (16)
9. **LOVEMORE NDOU** South Africa 46-10-1 (31)
10. **JUAN LAZCANO** Mexico 37-5-1 (27)

Lightweights
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JOEL CASAMAYOR Cuba 36-3-1 (22)

1. **NATE CAMPBELL** Jacksonville, FL 32-5-1 (25)
2. **MANNY PACQUIAO** Philippines 47-3-2 (35)
3. **JUAN DIAZ** Houston, TX 33-1 (17)
4. **DAVID DIAZ** Chicago, IL 34-2-1 (17)
5. **JOSE SANTA CRUZ** Mexico 26-3 (15)
6. **JULIO DIAZ** Mexico 35-4 (26)
7. **MICHAEL KATSIDIS** Australia 23-1 (20)
8. **AMIR KHAN** England 18-0 (14)
9. **YURI ROMANOV** Belarus 21-2 (14)
10. **ALI FUNEKA** South Africa 30-1-2 (25)

Jr. Lightweights
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: VACANT

1. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 48-4-1 (35)
2. **JOAN GUZMAN** Dominican Republic 28-0 (17)
3. **EDWIN VALERO** Venezuela 24-0 (24)
4. **HUMBERTO SOTO** Mexico 44-7-2 (28)
5. **JORGE BARRIOS** Argentina 47-3-1 (34)
6. **ALEX ARTHUR** Scotland 26-1 (19)
7. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI** Thailand 56-3-1 (45)
8. **CASSIUS BALOYI** South Africa 35-3-1 (18)
9. **MZONKE FANA** South Africa 27-4 (10)
10. **ROCKY JUAREZ** Houston, TX 27-4 (19)

Jr. Bantamweights
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CRISTIAN MIJARES** Mexico 35-3-2 (14)
2. **FERNANDO MONTIEL** Mexico 37-3-1 (28)
3. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ** Venezuela 32-3 (27)
4. **VIC DARCHINYAN** Armenia 30-1-1 (24)
5. **NOBUO NASHIRO** Japan 11-1 (7)
6. **JORGE ARCE** Mexico 49-4-1 (37)
7. **JOSE NAVARRO** Los Angeles, CA 26-4 (12)
8. **Z GORRES** Philippines 28-2-2 (15)
9. **DIMITRI KIRILOV** Russia 29-4-1 (9)
10. **RAFAEL CONCEPCION** Panama 11-2-1 (7)

Flyweights
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NONITO DONAIRE** Philippines 19-1 (12)
2. **DAISUKE NAITO** Japan 33-2-3 (21)
3. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM** Thailand 67-3-1 (35)
4. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA** Japan 33-4-2 (15)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ** Argentina 27-0-2 (17)
6. **ROBERTO VASQUEZ** Panama 26-2 (19)
7. **DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT** Thailand 43-1-1 (18)
8. **JOSE LOPEZ** Puerto Rico 37-7-2 (31)
9. **KOKI KAMEDA** Japan 18-0 (12)
10. **HUGO CAZARES** Mexico 26-4-1 (19)

Jr. Flyweights
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: IVAN CALDERON Puerto Rico 31-0 (6)

1. **ULISES SOLIS** Mexico 27-1-2 (20)
2. **CESAR CANCHILA** Colombia 27-1 (21)
3. **GIOVANNI SEGURA** Mexico 19-1-1 (15)
4. **EDGAR SOSA** Mexico 32-5 (17)
5. **JUANITO RUBILLAR** Philippines 46-10-7 (22)
6. **OMAR NINO** Mexico 25-3-1 (11)
7. **DANIEL REYES** Colombia 39-5-1 (30)
8. **NELSON DIEPPA** Puerto Rico 25-5-2 (14)
9. **BRAHIM ASLOUM** France 23-2 (9)
10. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO** Argentina 18-1 (9)

Strawweights
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **YUTAKA NIIDA** Japan 23-1-3 (9)
2. **RAUL GARCIA** Mexico 23-0-1 (15)
3. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI** Thailand 27-0 (11)
4. **EAGLE KYOWA** Thailand 18-2 (6)
5. **FLORANTE CONDES** Philippines 22-4-1 (20)
6. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN** Indonesia 62-6-5 (31)
7. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA** Japan 21-3 (9)
8. **DONNIE NIETES** Philippines 22-1-3 (13)
9. **JUAN PALACIOS** Nicaragua 24-2 (19)
10. **NKOSINATHI JOYI** South Africa 18-0 (14)

By Jeff Ryan

Send This Idea Paq-Ing

Boxing has been at it once again, doing what it does better than just about any other sport. That's making dream pairings come true. Hoops purists got their Celtics-Lakers matchup in the NBA Finals, but had to sweat out three rounds of playoffs first. Wimbledon served up a Nadal-Federer final, but only after both men avoided the upset-threatening minefield of six matches apiece. The fight game, on the other hand, virtually assures that its superstar showdowns will take place. One promoter simply calls another, and if the money's right and the details can be worked out (if the money's right, the details always work out), they can start designing the souvenir T-shirts.

Those of you whose T-shirt drawers are stuffed worse than James Toney at a breakfast buffet might want to think about tossing some of those old rags with the moth holes, yellowed underarms, and indelible blueberry pie stains come December. That is, if an agreement can be reached and we have the chance to commemorate a Manny Pacquiao-Oscar De La Hoya welterweight bout in 100 percent cotton. Pacquiao vs. De La Hoya. Wow! When it comes to star power on "The Strip," those two make Elton John and Celine Dion look like street musicians singing for tips in front of a taxi stand.

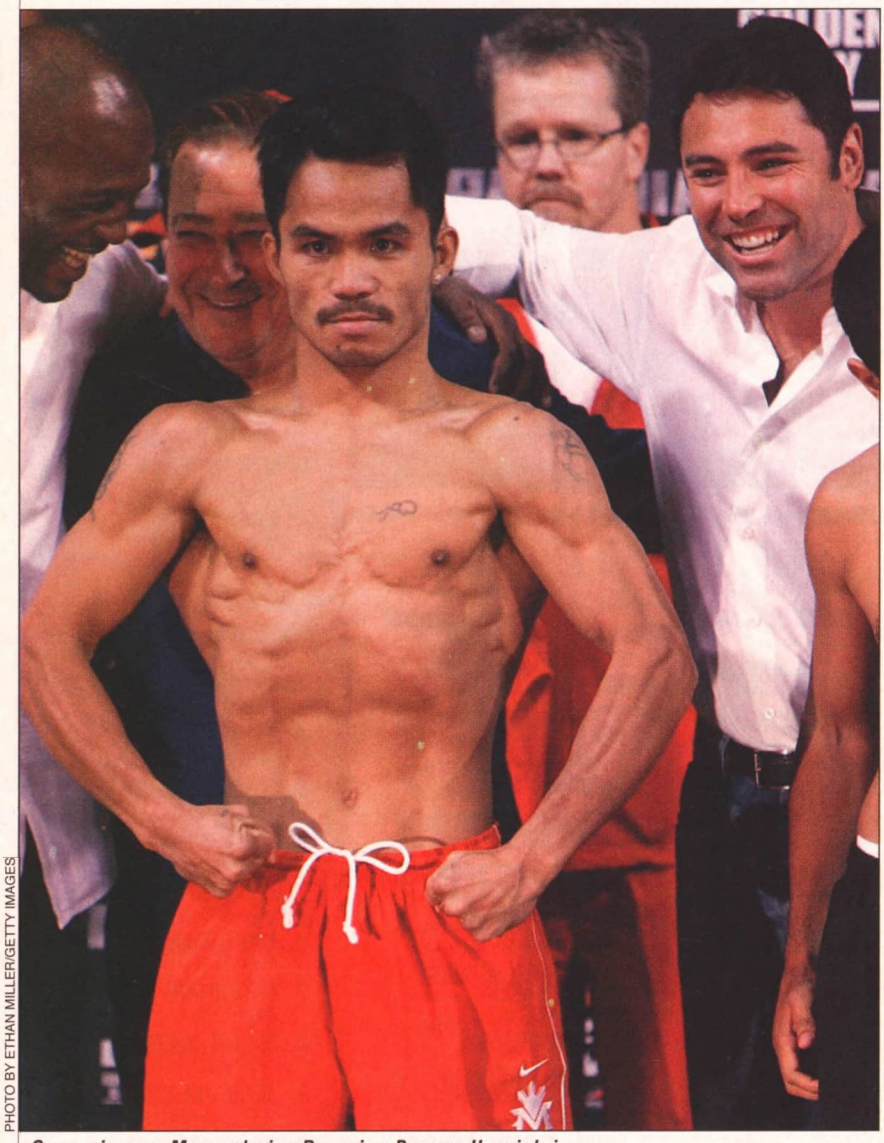


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Oscar sizes up Manny during Pacquiao-Barrera II weigh-in

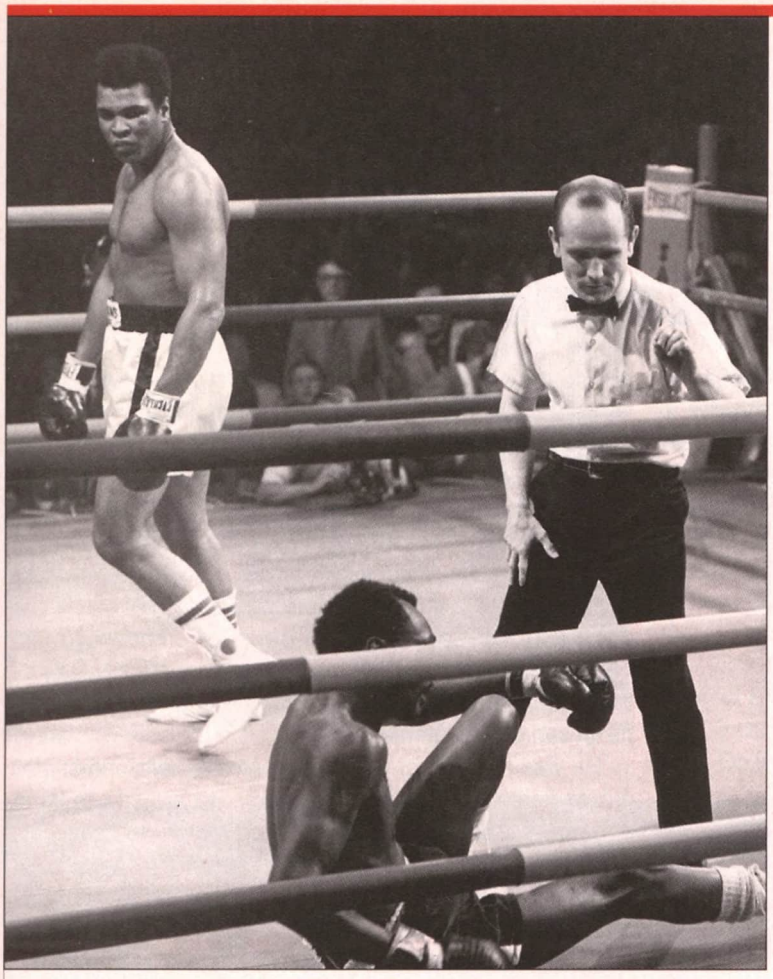
"Pac-Man" vs. "Golden Boy" would be a battle of future Hall of Famers. It would be high drama. It would be a potential pay-per-view bonanza.

And it would be a mistake.

For although it may be a shootout between super-duperstars, it's not Sugar Ray Leonard vs. Thomas Hearns. No, it's more like Muhammad Ali vs. Bob Foster. One guy is just too big, too strong, and too used to the weight to lose to his smaller rival. Pacquiao-De La Hoya would be a give-and-take delight—for a while. Then the former Olympic champion would wear down the Filipino, possibly slice open his brow, and either force a stoppage or roll on to a very comfortable victory on the scorecards.

You have to wonder what Pacquiao's promoter, Bob Arum, was thinking by seeking such a challenge. Does he believe that much in Pacquiao? That little in De La Hoya? Has the checkered history between him and the Golden Boy altered Arum's perspective? Or does Arum merely realize that a bout against even a faded, semi-active De La Hoya could earn Pacquiao more money (at least $10-million) than just about any other he can take?

There's an adage in boxing that the



Referee Mills Lane counts out Foster as Ali admires his handiwork

good big man beats the good little man, and that has too often proved true, no matter how skilled the smaller fighter was. Take a look at the Hall of Famers who faltered when moving north. Foster lost to both Ali and Joe Frazier. Benny Leonard couldn't get past Jimmy McLarnin. Jose Napoles fell to Carlos Monzon. De La Hoya was stopped by Bernard Hopkins. Carlos Zarate was annihilated by Wilfredo Gomez, and Gomez himself was destroyed by Salvador Sanchez. Zarate and Gomez, fighters most comparable in size to a prime Pacquiao, suffered brutal kayos after moving up just four pounds. For the De La Hoya clash, Pacquiao would be adding 12 pounds from his last outing, a knockout of WBC lightweight king David Diaz, and a whopping 41 pounds from when he turned pro in 1995.

Don't believe what the ladies say. Size *does* matter, especially in the lighter weight classes. Welterweight/junior middleweight Wilfred Benitez, whose reflexes were faster than a cougar's and who was one of the finest defensive fighters of his generation, once dropped a decision to Mustafa Hamsho, who moved with the speed and grace of a skyscraper shifting during an earthquake, but was able to outmuscle Benitez effectively.

If they fought, Pacquiao would concede four inches in height and six inches in reach to De La Hoya. Pac-Man's power, downright bone-breaking from junior flyweight through featherweight, has lost its one-punch potency in the last few years. In De La Hoya, he'd be facing a hard hitter who possesses a good chin and superb counterpunching skills. Pacquiao, who has trouble with technicians, is sloppy defensively, and prone to cuts, would likely have to win via decision. That means outworking a bigger man who is more accustomed to competing at 147 pounds and even fought effectively for a few rounds at middleweight against the likes of the legendary Hopkins. It seems like a difficult assignment for Pacquiao, to say the least.

To make matters worse, a De La Hoya who has appeared distracted and disinterested in recent years, would be quite motivated this time around. If his next fight is indeed his last career outing, he'll want to leave everyone with a smashing memory. Deep down, he might have known that he couldn't beat boxing's best fighter, Floyd Mayweather, in a rematch. But with Mayweather now playing shuffleboard, eating early-bird specials, and watching *Wheel Of Fortune* with the other retirees, De La Hoya would have a different pound-for-pound king to zero in on, and a real chance of beating him. And that wouldn't be a bad final line on the resume.

The shame of all this is that if he faced such a mainstream megastar, Pacquiao might become better known for a fight he'd likely lose than he ever was for collecting world titles and being named THE RING's Fighter of the Year in '06. If, as some of us suspect, De La Hoya would win convincingly, what would that do to Pacquiao's reputation? With his ring style, personality, and willingness to sign for one tough foe after another, Pac-Man has been one of the best things about boxing in the past decade. He deserves better than to have his record tainted by a loss in a fight he never should have taken.

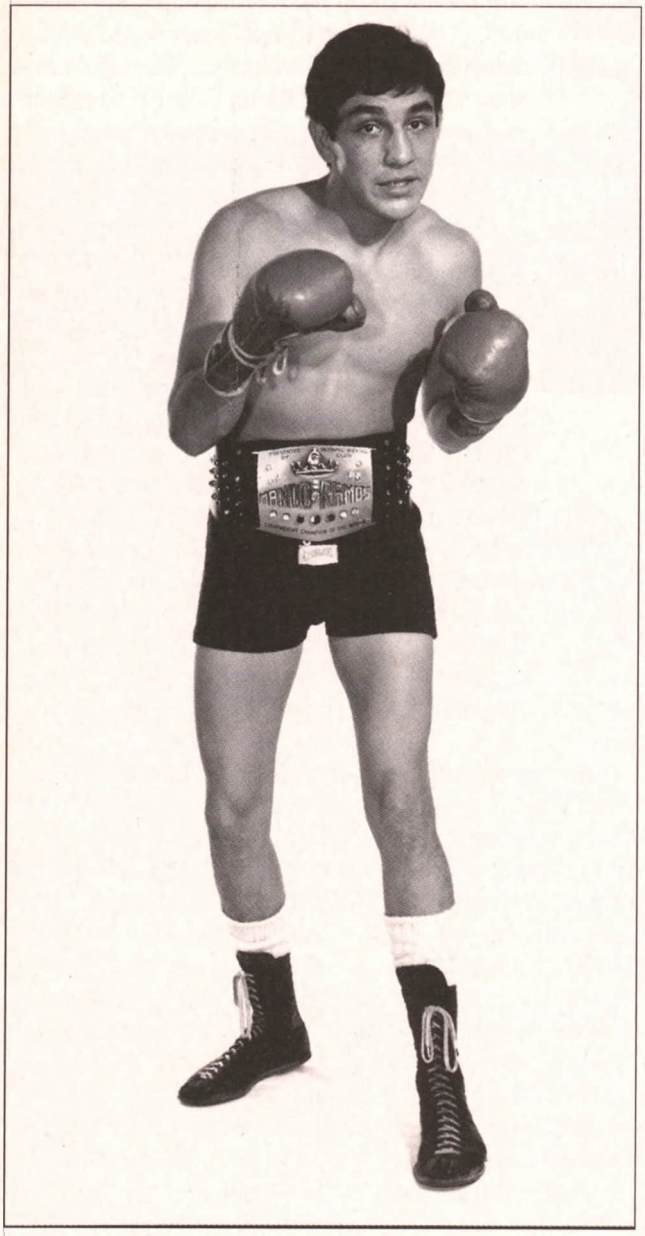
And say, for argument's sake, Pacquiao won. Then what? Would he drop back down to lightweight? Perhaps meet Ricky Hatton at junior welter? Or would Pac-Man succumb to the temptation and financial offers to stay at welter, a minefield cluttered with dangerous assassins like Antonio Margarito, Miguel Cotto, Paul Williams, and Joshua Clottey? If it's hard to envision him beating De La Hoya, a 35-year-old businessman who laces up the gloves only once every year or so, how is he going to fare against those other natural welters?

Better that the issues that threatened to scuttle the matchup in late-summer remain roadblocks and Pacquiao stays right where he is at 135 pounds. Yes, Pacquiao-De La Hoya is a fight that should take place. But only in a computer, ala Ali-Rocky Marciano, or in the recesses of Bob Arum's vivid imagination. ■

By Ivan Goldman

Remembering Mando Ramos

The late ex-lightweight champ Mando Ramos—a fighter's fighter who could box but loved to mix it up—attended cards regularly around Los Angeles. He'd come early and watch the prelims, giving them no less attention than superfights. No one loved seeing a good fight more than Mando. But when we'd talk on the phone, Mando preferred to discuss ways to help fighters and ex-fighters unequipped to handle their health and financial problems. Some of his message was exemplified by his own life, though in some ways he was luckier than most.



Ramos as he looked in his prime

After quitting the ring, Mando made it into the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, a much sought-after ticket around the harbor area where he grew up. He credited a union-sponsored program with curing him of an addiction to alcohol and drugs so pronounced that he'd drink wine in the dressing room before a fight. After all the hard living and hard fights, when Mando died at age 59 he looked older than his years.

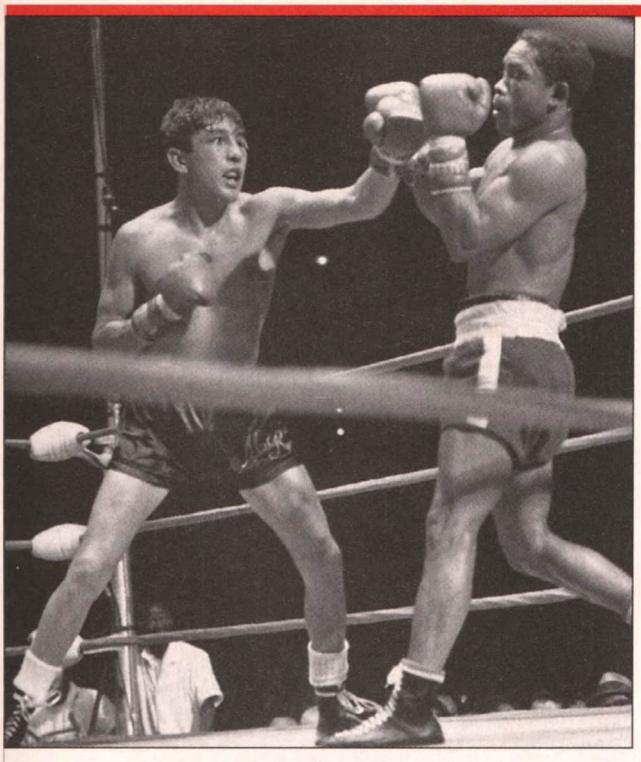
He was the kind of guy who went out there and sniffed out ex-fighters living in junked cars. He brought them in and made sure they got help. When health permitted, he trained neighborhood kids at the Harbor Boxing Club in San Pedro. When he complained about his horrendous back condition, he was particularly upset over his inability to get down low enough to demonstrate a proper body-punch. "And bodypunches were my bread and butter," he lamented.

Mando had that telltale ex-fighter slur in his speech that sounds like someone talking with a sweat-sock in his mouth. He often repeated himself too. None of the obituaries I read mentioned these symptoms. But Mando desperately wanted everyone to care about fighters and look out for their welfare. Revealing the facts furthers his mission even after death, which I believe he'd appreciate. If I'm wrong, I know he'd forgive me. Because regardless of what was or wasn't wrong with his head, Mando Ramos had a kind heart.

Not Again: When I heard Bernard Hopkins was selected as Kelly Pavlik's next opponent, I figured this might make a nice event for HBO's *Boxing After Dark* or *ShoBox*. Pavlik is the kind of young lion those shows thirst for, and though he's risen above the *B.A.D.* and *ShoBox* stage of his career, against Hopkins, that seemed the best place for the fight.

Not that I belittle Hopkins' abilities. The man is supernatural. He can stop time in its tracks, making a 12-rounder seem longer than a cricket match. Competing promoter Dan Goossen, never at a loss for words, immediately declared he'd "rather watch *Gomer Pyle* reruns than suffer through a Hopkins-Pavlik hugfest."

When I learned the next Hopkins bore-o-rama was slat-



Ramos takes lightweight title from Teo Cruz

ed for pay-per-view, I wondered whether a more appropriate network might be the Comedy Channel. Hopkins competitions haven't looked much like a fight for years. A week or two later he finds a microphone and promises to murder his next opponent, blah, blah, blah. Or maybe retire. For half-an-hour.

Rather than endure another episode in the Hopkins Follies, it might be preferable to hide out in the Unabomber's windowless cabin up in Montana. Bet there's no dish or cable connection for miles. But like you, I've got responsibilities. So instead, I ponder why any of us tune in to these Hopkins charades. Some of us hope the old guy will pull something out of his hat and vanquish the whippersnapper. Others want to see the kid finally put an end to Hopkins' long running snore-a-thon and knock him on his butt. All of us hope something will happen. But Hopkins is terribly adept at preventing that circumstance. Oh, as James Conrad wrote, "the horror, the horror."

"Executioner" Expertise: Hopkins' series, "Perfect Execution," at the back of this magazine on how to fight, including how to prepare for a fight, is absolute dynamite. Go figure.

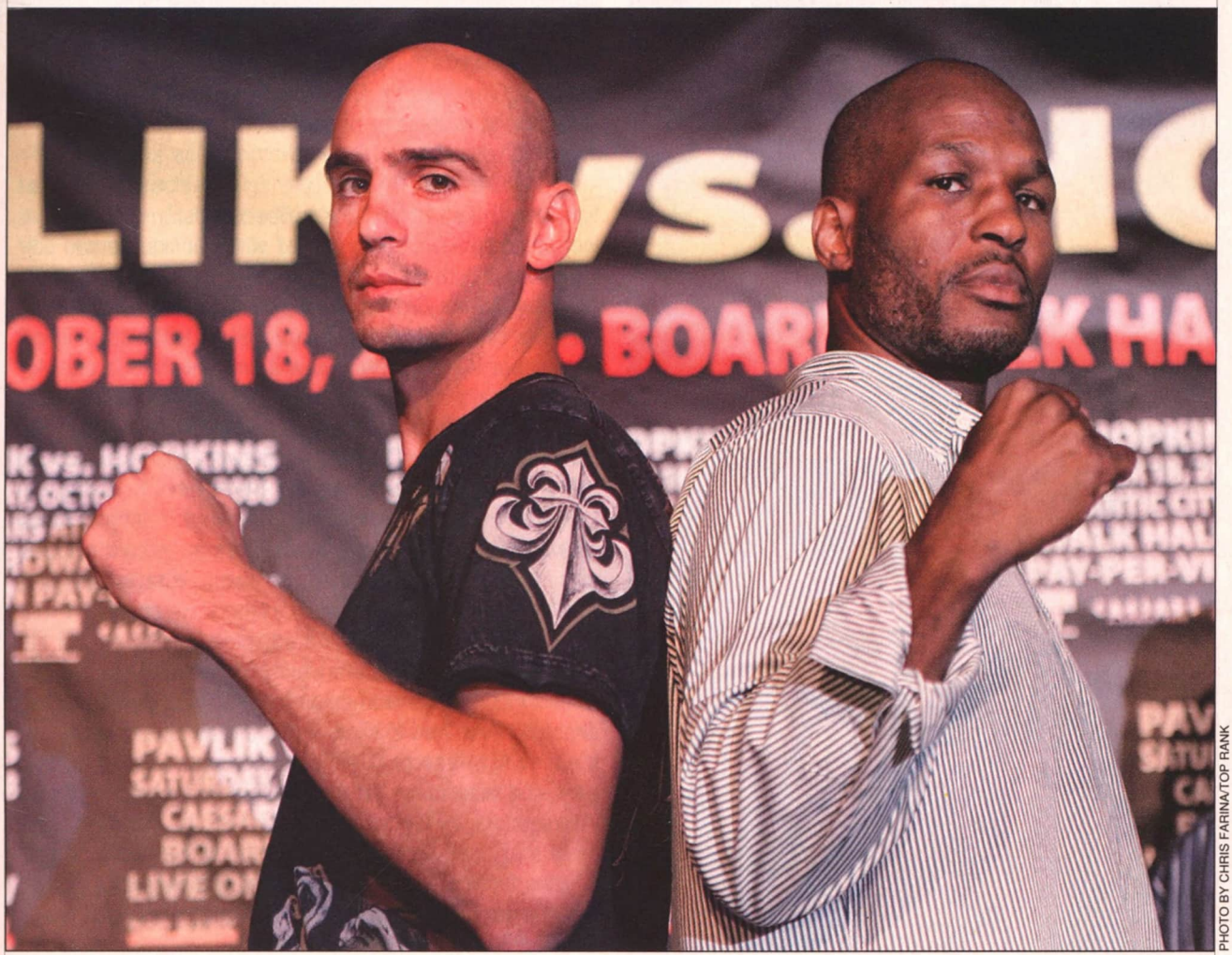


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Is Pavlik-Hopkins pay-per-view-worthy?

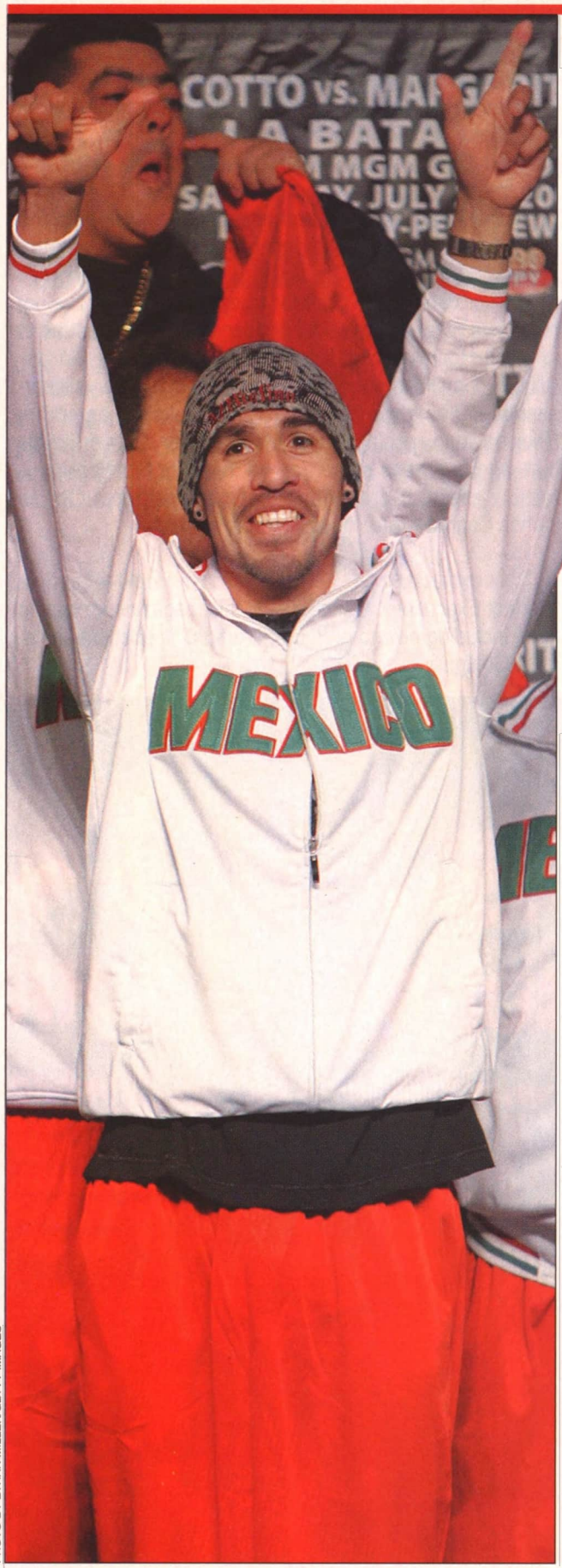


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

What's the real reason Oscar doesn't want to fight Margarito?

Wrestling For Dollars: Nikolay Valuev vs. John Ruiz again? True, injury-prone Ruslan Chagaev kept postponing the fight, but when fed-up Team Valuev replaced Chagaev with Ruiz, that presented another set of problems. Because, unfortunately for fans, Ruiz doesn't postpone matches.

But let's face it, Miguel Cotto would have taken less punishment against Antonio Margarito had he stood his ground and clinched from time to time (like Ruiz does all the time) instead of backing up. Against a beast like Margarito, forcing an occasional clinch is honorable. I didn't see one until the 10th round, and it lasted possibly four seconds. Cotto's one of those rare fighters who can punish his opponent while retreating. But you can visit gyms from one end of the world to the other and hear trainers yelling at their fighters in different languages, "Don't go back." Why? Because it doesn't help.

It's unlikely Oscar De La Hoya fears Margarito, although he must at least suspect in his heart that he can't defeat him. I believe what kept "The Golden Boy" from penciling in Margarito for his December swan song was the knowledge that most Hispanic fans would cheer for Margarito. They love a Cinderella story, and Antonio's is much fresher than Oscar's. The Golden Boy should have waited to retire before he took up golf.

"Little Rocky" News: Renaissance woman Rochelle Gilken of *The Palm Beach Post* in Florida, who won a first-place Barney Award with her first-person column about fighting in the amateurs, went on to win the National Golden Gloves as a light flyweight and a grueling episode of *American Gladiator*. But thanks to a dying newspaper industry, she's now a writer without a gig. Her employer laid off half the staff, and she quit rather than work in the rubble. "It breaks my heart to think I might not be a writer anymore," she told me.

Magoo One: Kenny Bayless is a mostly flawless referee, but when helpless Cotto retreated to the ropes after taking a knee in the 11th round against surging machine Margarito, Cotto was finished. He showed it with his eyes, his body, his bloated, bleeding face, and his gloves, which were at his waist. Bayless shouldn't have forced him to take a knee a second time. Cotto's uncle shouldn't have had to climb up on the apron and surrender for him. Bayless pointed out later that Cotto was still punching effectively. True. But his defense was shot. He was shot.

Magoo Two: I didn't see it, but people I trust tell me the judge who scored it 100-90 for Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. in his split decision win over Matt Vanda in Hermosillo, Mexico, had to be out of his tree. That would

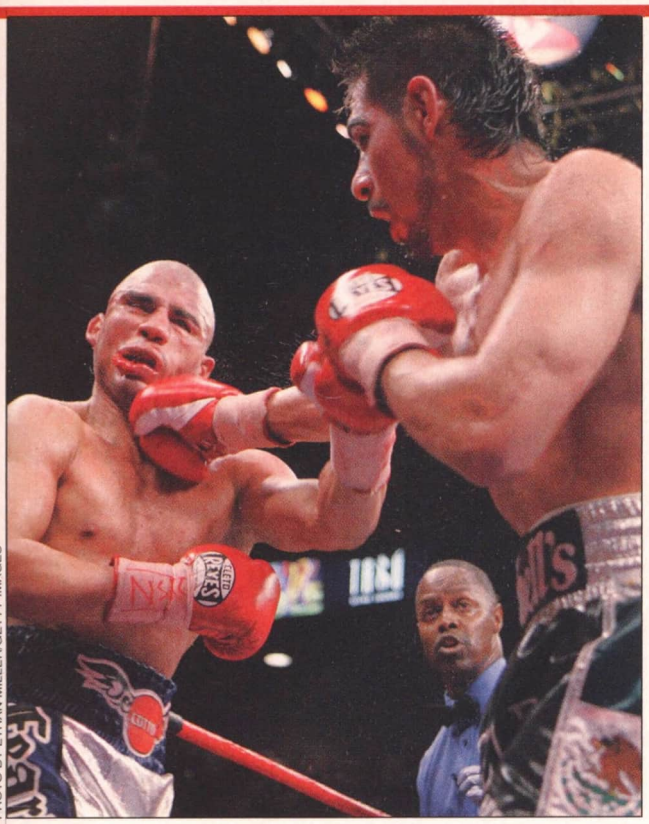


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Did ref Bayless wait too long to rescue Cotto?

be Franciso Mouret.

I've been told we're supposed to feel sorry for a kid whose father's achievements were outstanding, because he will have such a tough time with the inevitable comparisons. Maybe. But every boxer, politician, journalist, etc. who moves up thanks to family connections is taking up space that a deserving person ought to fill. If Chavez Jr. had what it takes, his promoter, Bob Arum, would be showing him off on HBO, Showtime, ESPN, or Telefutura.

Arum gave the young De La Hoya, for example, plenty of exposure because Arum knew he could fight. There's a reason he hides Chavez Jr.'s light under a bushel, and it's not because Julio glows in the dark. That said, Chavez Jr. has guts and even talent. But he can't punch like a junior middle, and the bigger he gets, the more dangerous it gets because his genes won't allow him to fight as defensively as an inadequately powered competitor must.

Futch Award One: To the California Commission headed by Armando Garcia for admitting its error and declaring Hasim Rahman-James Toney II a no-decision, overruling its earlier decision of a TKO for Toney after the clash of heads in round three opened a cut over Rahman's left eye. However, had Toney been in Rahman's boxing shoes, you can bet he'd have kept going. Fighting and winning is important to Toney, but no more important than being tough. Trouble is, his style is to work his way in close, take little steps, and use upper body and head movement to slip punches while he picks his shots. It's a formula made for head clashes.

The fact that Toney-Rahman II was being televised by Fox Sports instead of HBO or Showtime underscored the do-or-die nature of the contest and no doubt had much to do with why they both trained hungry and showed up ready to fight. It seemed clear from the outset that we were in for a rare treat—an excellent heavyweight fight. James even got down to a relatively less rotund 226 pounds. Obviously, these two must do it again. But it will take months to put the match together and neither of the two aging warriors has months to give away.

Futch Award Two: To Teams Cotto and Margarito for agreeing to make this fantastic match, and to their promoter, Bob Arum, for going ahead with it even though one of them had to lose.

Futch Award Three: In appreciation to light heavyweight Julio Gonzalez. At age 32, he lost his third straight, to talented youngster Tavoris Cloud, 19-0 (18). Can anyone remember seeing Julio in a bad fight?

Correction: Lightweight Henry Lundy, 11-0 (6), won a unanimous decision over previously undefeated Esteban Alvarez in Lincoln, Rhode Island. A fighter who scores a victory deserves to have it reported correctly, and this columnist and THE RING deeply regret this reporting error. ■

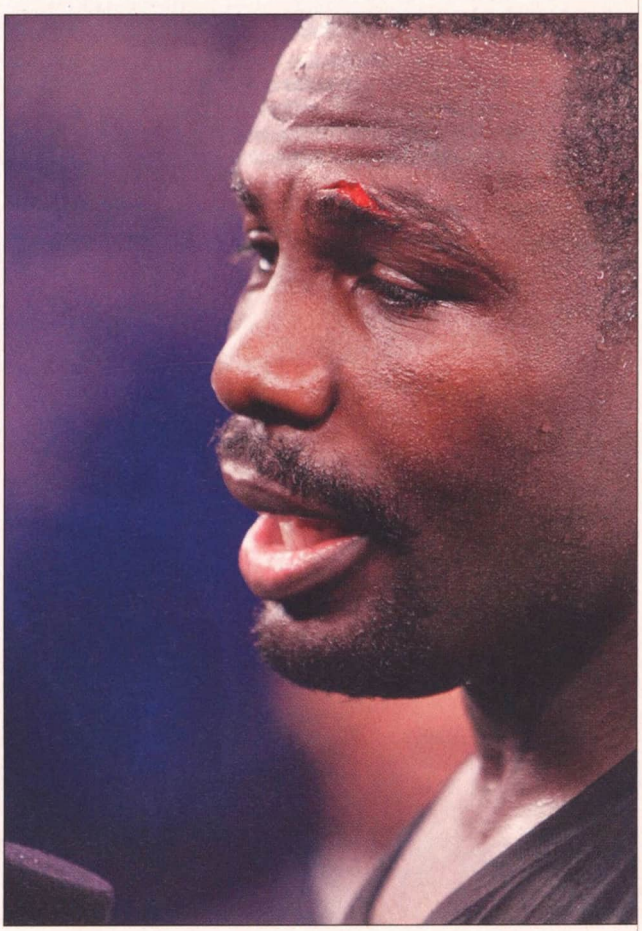


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

California commission removed loss from Rahman's record

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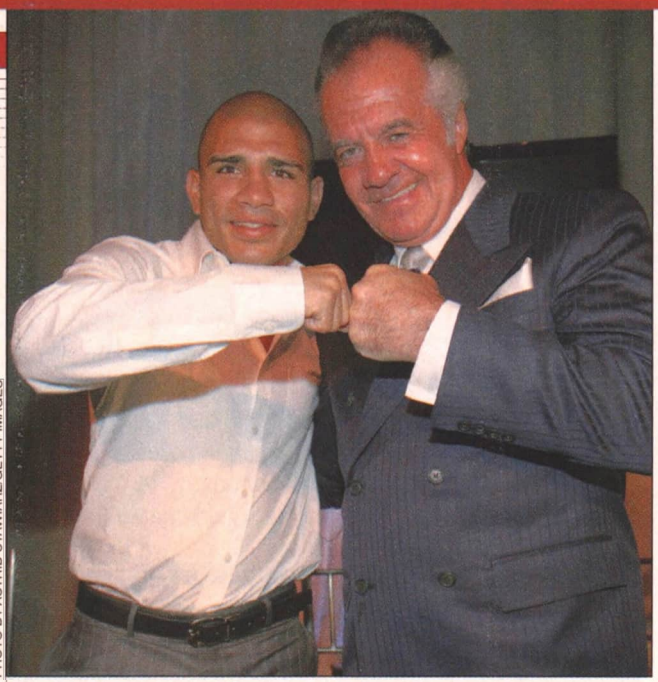

PHOTO BY ASTRID STAWIARZ/GETTY IMAGES

Two guys who know a thing or two about how to whack, Miguel Cotto and Sopranos *star Tony Sirico, meet at "All In For Tikva" Casino Night at Cipriani in New York in August. This was one of Cotto's first public appearances since his loss to Antonio Margarito, and he seemed in pretty good spirits (though that may have been because he and Paulie Walnuts just got back from a trip to the Bada Bing).*

PHOTO BY OLIVIER MORIN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Wouldn't it be interesting if Manny Pacquiao were able to don the gloves and headgear and do more for his native Philippines than merely lead its delegation of athletes at the Beijing Games' opening ceremonies? We're not exactly advocating pro boxers in the Olympics, but think about it: How much fun would it have been to watch the U.S. basketball team if it were comprised mainly of college freshmen and sophomores?

PHOTO BY JACQUES DEMARTHON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Complain all you want about the judging in the Olympic boxing matches, but you can't criticize the timekeeper, who did his job controversy-free in Beijing. And the beauty of the bell that they used at Workers' Indoor Arena is that it also doubles as a desk lamp.

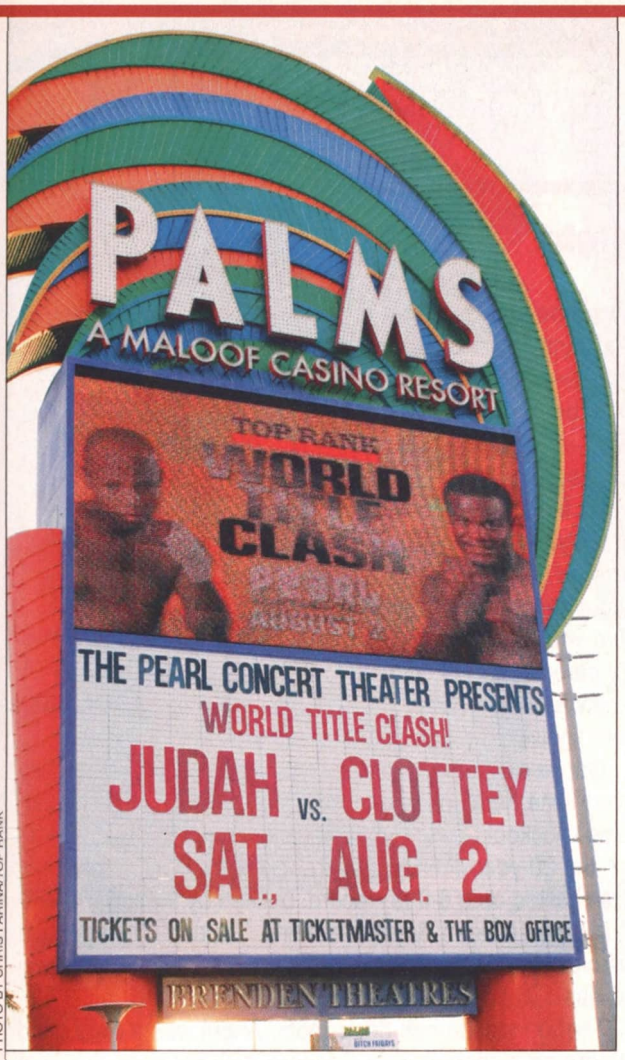

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Perhaps this billboard, and the phrase "World Title Clash," was a little too fresh in the mind of referee Robert Byrd when he mistakenly ruled Zab Judah's cut to be caused by a clash of heads that never actually happened. (And don't get us started on our disgust over the "world title" label.) Nevertheless, this was a quality match between world-class welterweight contenders Judah and Joshua Clottey, and it's great to see the Palms getting involved in the fight game.

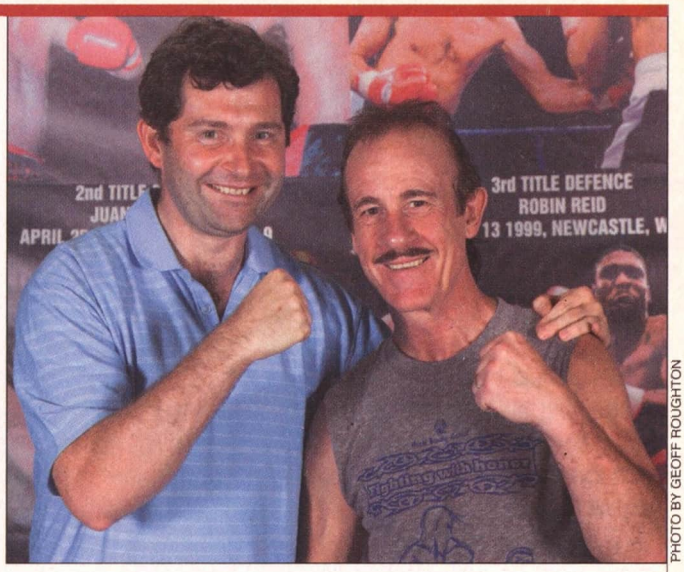

PHOTO BY GEOFF ROUGHTON

This photo features the man responsible for Joe Calzaghe's biography and the man responsible for Joe Calzaghe's biology. That's The Ring's European correspondent, Brian Doogan, who ghost wrote Calzaghe's recent autobiography, posing with Joe's dad and trainer, Enzo Calzaghe. Brian is not only one of The Ring's most talented writers, but as is clear here, he's also ranks highly among Ring writers in sweat-gland activity.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

July 26 was a great night to be an Antonio Margarito fan (and apparently a productive night for the guy selling programs at the MGM Grand). The Mexican Margarito faithful drowned out Miguel Cotto's Puerto Rican fans all night, which either means they had Cotto's supporters outnumbered, or they were simply out-drinking them.

By Joseph Santoliquito

Danny Garcia Junior Welterweight

The tiny silhouette with the flashing little hands was back in front of the TV screen again. Angel Garcia would bark at the slipping, dipping figure that was obstructing his view, "Move, I want to see the fight!" But Angel could never stay angry for long. Instead, he'd smile, lean forward, and pull his still-punching son back up on his lap, as they absorbed another Julio Cesar Chavez fight.

There would be enough time later for Danny Garcia to mimic what he just watched with his father. Time to dart and move and jab like the great Chavez. Time to pound away another opponent the way Chavez did. Time to become great.

The only problem was that Angel had to pick up Danny right after school every day, because many of the punches he had learned watching Chavez on TV would be practiced on some unsuspecting kid. Danny Garcia couldn't help it—he loved fighting. He's been fighting since birth.

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

Pro Record

2007		
Nov. 17	Mike Denby, Atlantic City, NJ	KO 1
Dec. 8	Jesus Villareal, Las Vegas, NV	KO 2
2008		
Jan. 11	Marlo Cortez, Cabazon, CA	KO 2
March 15	Charles Wade, Las Vegas	KO 1
April 19	Guadalupe Diaz, Las Vegas	KO 1
May 3	Julio Gamboa, Carson, CA	W 6

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
6	6	0	0	5

"Hey, I came into this world fighting," said Garcia. "My mother and father remind me to this day about having the umbilical cord wrapped around my throat, choking me. I fought that. My parents tell me the doctors said I got tangled up, and my face was purple before they cut the cord. You can say I was born fighting."

Garcia carries that same scrappy attitude with him today every time he steps into a boxing ring. His right hand contains knockout power, as does his left hook to the body. So far, the 20-year-old, Philadelphia-based junior welterweight has chalked up a 6-0 (5) record, backed by manager Shelly Finkel and Golden Boy Promotions. Trained by Angel and his older brother, Erik, Danny figures he's doing something he was always destined to become.

The foundation has deep roots. Angel was a very good athlete as a teenager, but severe asthma kept him from pursuing a boxing career. He tried vicariously passing his love of the sport on to his sons, Erik and Danny. With Erik, it didn't take. He showed flashes of speed and ability, but he lasted only six amateur fights before he gave it up.

Danny was different. "My father would tell me more than a few times to move from in front of the TV during fights," said Danny, laughing. "But those times were great. Imagine sitting there on your father's lap watching the fights. That's where every fight fan started. That's where I started. I'd watch Julio Cesar Chavez, Oscar De La Hoya, all of the greats from that time. Then I'd get up and try to do what they did. I tried to hold my hands up to my face, like Chavez did, or throw a jab the way Oscar does."

But the Garcias were staring at one major roadblock that could have kept young Danny out of the gym: He was too young to train. In Philadelphia at the time, boxing gyms would not permit children under the age of 10 to train for insurance reasons. But Angel had found a way around that. He fibbed. Just a little, by about three years.

There, in a tangible boxing environment, instead of one coming through a TV screen, Angel would teach young Danny the basics: how to hit a heavybag, building up rhythm for the speedbag, and tenets of conditioning, start-

(Continued on Page 116)

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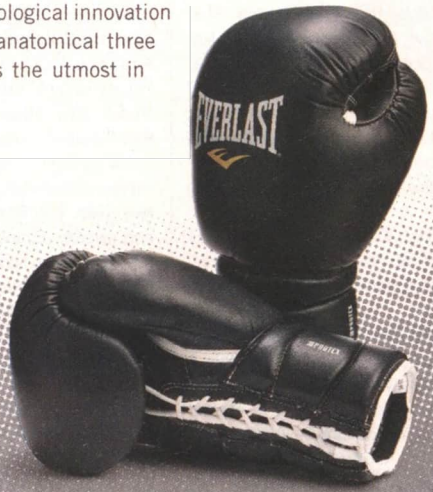

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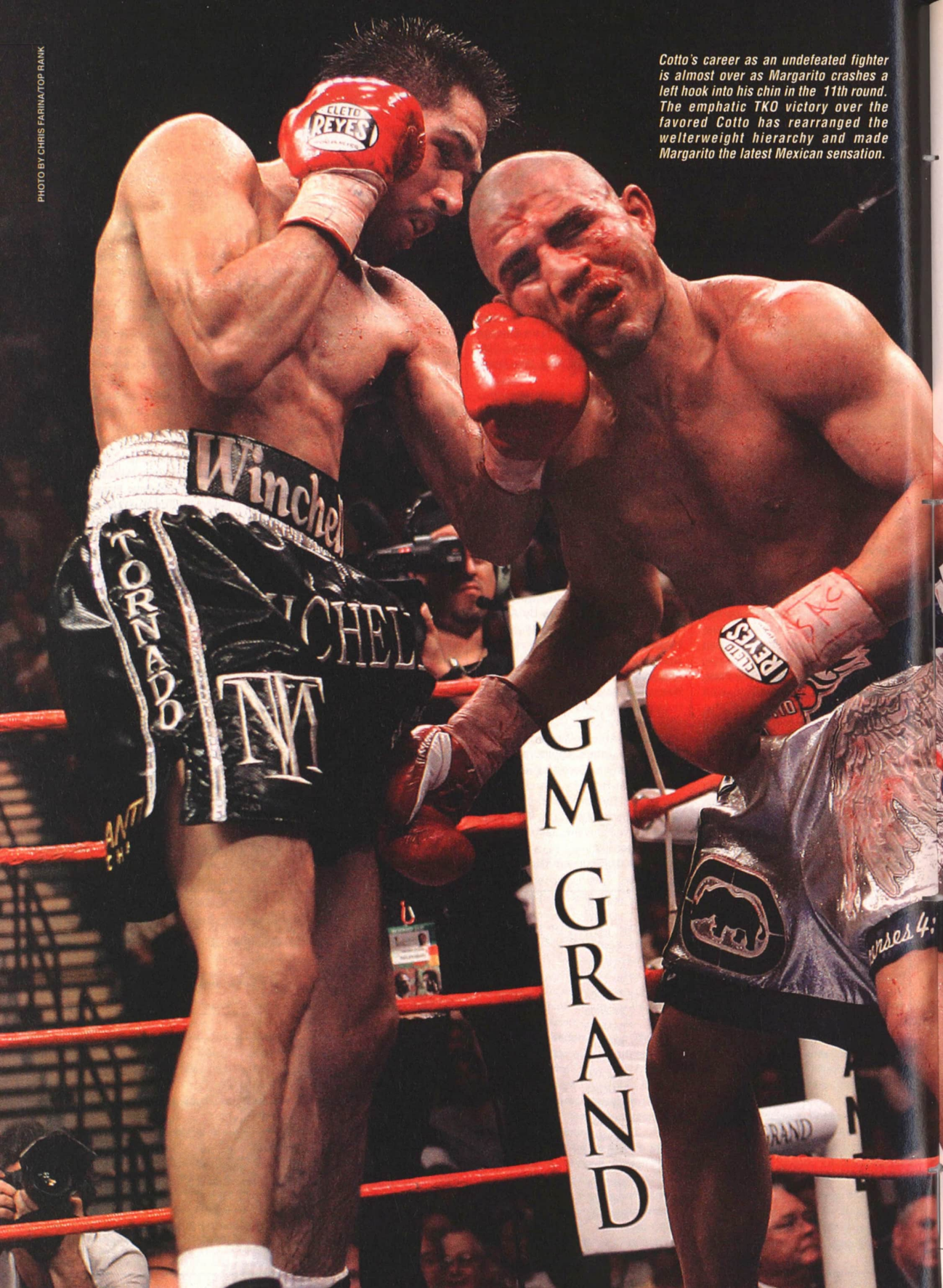


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Cotto's career as an undefeated fighter is almost over as Margarito crashes a left hook into his chin in the 11th round. The emphatic TKO victory over the favored Cotto has rearranged the welterweight hierarchy and made Margarito the latest Mexican sensation.

WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT TO FIGHT THIS MAN?

MARGARITO'S GOOD NEWS/BAD NEWS VICTORY

By Joseph Santoliquito

Antonio Margarito waded through the corridor of humanity, being engulfed every few steps by a green, white, and red maze of outstretched arms, hands, and heads. They tried grabbing as much of him as possible. They even tried grabbing the lint from the tape on his hands. Each time, Margarito had to pry himself free, with the help of police officers and cornermen.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Throughout most of the first six rounds, Cotto's better boxing and accurate counterpunching controlled the fight. But despite all the flush punches he landed, he could never hurt his Mexican rival or slow his relentless attack.

Mexican flags were waving. Chants of "May-hee-coo, May-hee-coo, May-hee-coo" reverberated throughout the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

Nobody wanted to let go of the moment, nor did they want to release "The Tijuana Tornado" as he walked out of the ring after accomplishing what many thought was virtually impossible—not just beating the previously undefeated Miguel Cotto, but pounding the Puerto Rican star into submission.

It was a stark contrast to a year ago, when, coming off a loss to Paul Williams, Margarito's career seemed to be sliding backward. He so badly wanted to be a hero to his Mexican countrymen, and things had gotten so bad, he could walk down any street in his home city of Tijuana and barely turn heads.

Margarito was once known as "the most avoided fighter in the game," and to hardcore fans that participate in Internet message boards, that distinction was almost as important as a championship. After the loss to Williams, even his diehard fans had little to post about.

Then he nibbled his way back. He knocked out Golden Johnson in one round. He came back and took the IBF belt in a rematch against Kermit Cintron, ripping him apart in six in a fight not many thought Margarito could win. The road to redemption ended with Cotto's demolition.

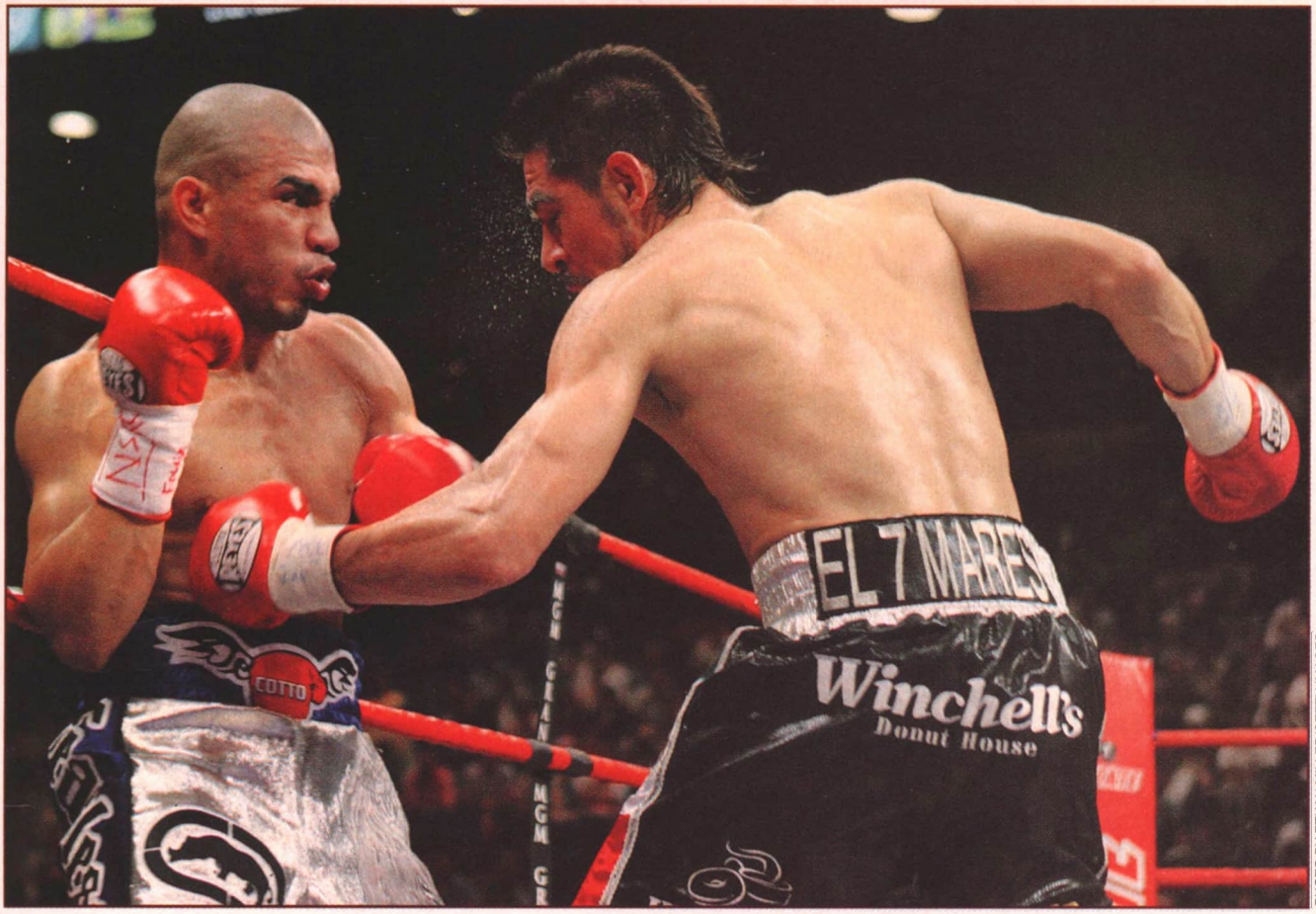
Life doesn't get much better for a fighter than it did for Margarito on July 26. He might not be a champion—yet—but he could soon reacquire that "most avoided" status. Only this time, it's not something he'll take pride in bragging about. At 30 years old, and with his stock as high as it's ever going to get, he can't afford to scare away big-money opponents.

"There's no way I would want to fight someone like me," said Margarito, laughing heartily as interpreter Fernando Ramirez translated his words into English. "Beating Cotto is the greatest victory I've had. I always felt I was the best welterweight in the world; I just needed the chance to prove it. I did something no one really thought I could do, except my people and me. But after I beat Cotto the way I did, I ask myself the same questions over and over again: *What have I done? Who will fight me now?*

"But I don't feel like I'm in the same spot I was before. I'm in a much better spot this time. I don't see it like other fighters are afraid of me. But I guess they are, if they don't want to fight me. There are megafights out there for me. I can feel it. I really want to fight Oscar De La Hoya. But if it isn't Oscar, I know someone has to fight me."

While many were anxiously hoping to crown Cotto as the sport's new superstar in order to fill the void created when Floyd Mayweather retired, it was actually Margarito who may have crossed over with the victory. It was an exciting, tense fight, filled with the kind of ebbs-and-flows that all great fights have. And it came stamped with a Mexican brand—punish your opponent, never retreat, and ultimately outman him, the way Margarito's idol, Julio Cesar Chavez, (seated ringside) used to do in his prime.

"Margarito keeps putting on pressure, he's like a machine that keeps on coming, like a choo-choo, and he'll eventually break you down," HBO color analyst Emanuel Steward told THE RING. "Even when Margarito got hit in the head, and that was plenty, he kept coming. Cotto wasn't beat on skill; Margarito beat him with size and tenacity. I can see why no one wants to face the guy. He's hard to defend against. I'd never like to work against a fighter like that."



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Even though he fell behind early, Margarito paved the way to eventual victory by pounding the body from the first round on. Cotto, usually an excellent bodypuncher, neglected go downstairs against Margarito, probably because his foe's head was an easy target.

Could a lot of trainers, managers, and promoters feel the same way? Could his career-defining victory actually hamper his career?

Do you think Cotto, for example, would want any part of Margarito again? Cotto was ahead on all three judges' scorecards after six rounds, 58-56, but once the left hooks to the body that Margarito had been landing from the start began to pay dividends, everything started to change. After one left hook to the body in the seventh, Cotto immediately sought shelter against the ropes and went into turtle mode, curling up to prevent more damage.

Digging to the body was a Margarito staple throughout the fight. The HBO broadcast team didn't notice it until the seventh, when the course of the fight began favoring Margarito. But as many ringsiders could see, the sway of the fight was gradually slipping away from Cotto as his energy was sapped by a continual fusillade of bodyshots.

"That's the thing about Margarito, he has that high-volume punch output that hurts," Steward said. "Cotto didn't know what do to once he started getting hit with those shots. It's usually Cotto who lands that high volume of punches that hurt. Not this time. Most high-volume punchers hit you with love taps—tap, tap, tap. But Margarito's high-volume attack comes with pain. The only person in boxing who can bring that kind of pain today at a high volume is Margarito."

But where does the victory leave Margarito? Top Rank boss Bob Arum didn't hesitate when asked what could be next.

"Margarito is simply going to go for the biggest payday out there, who can earn him the most money next," Arum said. "There are guys like Margarito who rise to an occasion. He was like a freight train that couldn't slow down, and the express train really ran over Cotto. I told Margarito right after the fight that this is his time to make money and it's my job to make sure he maximizes the most that he can make.

"We got a bad wrap about this fight, because one of the premier networks say they want the best fights, while all they show are the businessman fights and the public gets disappointed. We created our own hype for this fight and anyone who knows anything about boxing knew this fight couldn't be anything less than a great fight."

A week after the fight, Arum proved to be right, when the pay-per-view projections indicated well over 400,000 buys, possibly breaking 500,000. Arum had said he needed roughly 225,000 buys to break even.

Arum couldn't resist slipping in a zinger at Mayweather, who in 2006 turned down an $8-million offer to fight Margarito.

"You see how smart of a businessman Floyd Mayweather is to avoid fighting this beast, Margarito," Arum said with a sly grin. "Floyd's retired, let him be retired. When he can't throw hundred-

Tijuana Tornado Blows Away Cotto

It's rare that a major fight lives up to its billing, and even more uncommon—at the very top level at least—that brute force overcomes superior skill. But that's exactly what happened in front of 10,477 thrilled fans at the MGM Grand Garden Arena and HBO's pay-per-view audience when Antonio Margarito, 147, bludgeoned betting favorite Miguel Cotto, 147, Caguas, Puerto Rico, into a bloody, 11th-round TKO victim.

For six rounds, it appeared that the previously undefeated Cotto would outbox the onrushing Margarito. Cotto, 27, employed excellent footwork and upper-body movement to avoid most of Margarito's scything punches, while countering with sharp, head-twisting blows of his own. Margarito dug some hurtful-looking lefts to the body, but the vast majority of his offerings missed the target.

But by the midway point, despite leading 58-56 on all three official scorecards, time was running out for Cotto. The 30-year-old Margarito's relentless pressure and bodyattack was beginning to have a telling effect. That began to become evident in the seventh round, when Margarito changed the course of the fight with a left hook to body.

Cotto never won another round on the scorecards of Jerry Roth (USA) and Glen Hamada (USA), and lost three of the next four rounds on the card of Dave Moretti (USA). As Cotto's strength faded, Margarito's connect percentage rose, and the Puerto Rican began to take a beating.

Finally, in the 11th, a barrage of blows forced a blood-splattered Cotto to take a knee 80 seconds into the round. It was only the second time in Cotto's 33-fight career he touched the canvas. Cotto beat referee Kenny Bayless' count, but had nothing left. He dropped his hands, backed away unsteadily, and again took a knee, this time without being hit.

As Bayless started to count again, Evangelista Cotto climbed onto the ring apron and signaled that he wanted the fight stopped, which prompted Bayless to call a halt at the 2:05 mark.

"I told my corner I would wear him down and then knock him out," Margarito said. "He never hurt me, but that was the game plan, to come out early strong and to wear him down and knock him out. I got him with bodyshots, and then I hit him in the head, and knocked him out."

According to CompuBox, Margarito threw 987 total punches, and connected with 267, but the glaring number that leaps out is that 237 of those 267 connects were powerpunches. That spelled the difference. On the other hand, Cotto couldn't hurt Margarito with his 280 connects (out of 655 thrown), 101 of which were jabs.

Cotto's pain was eased somewhat by his $3-million purse, but the guess here is that he would have gladly trade every penny of it for a victory.

—J. S.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Margarito splits Cotto's guard with right

dollar bills into the air, then he'll come back to his senses and come back to boxing, to earn money the only way he can earn money."

Margarito deferred any questions about future plans to Arum. But the leading candidate, from the Margarito camp's point of view, is De La Hoya. "The Golden Boy" is looking to wrap up his illustrious career with a final fight in December, and Margarito would love to be the guy in the other corner.

"It's the fight I want, and the fight that I think I deserve," Margarito said. "Everyone wants to fight Oscar for the money, and I do think I deserve a big payday. If it were up to me, I'd fight Oscar for the money."

Sounds good to us, but is there any chance De La Hoya would want to face someone who could really hurt him, as opposed to a more popular, smaller fighter who probably can't, such as Manny Pacquiao?

"Look, boxing is a business, and fighters that didn't want to fight Antonio, because they knew Antonio is a tough, tough kind of fight, have to think differently," Arum said. "Something changed with the Cotto victory. People that wouldn't fight Antonio before now would be inclined to fight him because the money rewards would be so much greater. Now that changes the whole parameters of who won't and who will fight Antonio. It's a different ballgame now."

But Bruce Trampler, Top Rank's matchmaker, points out, "If you're Oscar, not Oscar himself, but his people, you try to pick out the most lucrative and safest fight for him, which will probably point Oscar toward Pacquiao. Oscar says he doesn't want to fight a Mexican or a Puerto Rican. If you're Oscar, you don't fight Margarito. But we will get a lot of calls for Antonio."

Paul Williams, who survived Margarito's late charge to win a close decision in July

'07, is out there. Margarito would certainly love an opportunity to avenge the loss, especially as he and Williams are ranked one and two, respectively by THE RING, and the winner would take the vacant RING world championship.

But would Williams' promoter, Dan Goossen, be willing to take that chance? Since beating Margarito, Williams has lost to Carlos Quintana, and then avenged the defeat with a first-round knockout in June.

"The Williams fight stayed with me, because he didn't win. I lost that fight," Margarito stressed. "I waited too long to come at him. But that fight motivated me 100 percent to change. I had to change; so I had to start thinking differently in the ring. I waited too long to come back against Williams. I attack now as soon as the bell rings."

Still, Margarito had to have a sampling of what he was up against in Cotto. In his last three fights, Cotto had mashed Alfonso Gomez and Zab Judah, and convincingly beat Shane Mosley. Cotto came to expect opponents to crumble when he hit them. Not the Tijuana Tornado.

"Once I felt Cotto's first punch, I knew it, that was it, I was going to win the fight," Margarito said. "Cotto's punch wasn't as hard or as strong as I thought it would be. I'd been in against fighters who hit much harder than Cotto. Once we got into an exchange, in that second round, I knew it was just a matter of time before I caught up with him and hurt him."

Javier Capetillo, Margarito's trainer, set up a simple game plan of using uppercuts and liver shots. On occasion, Margarito's uppercuts would cleave Cotto's double-tight guard in front of his face. To lower his hands, Margarito chopped at the body, and, steadily, Cotto's arms dropped.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

A sight we thought we'd never see: Cotto twice took a knee in the 11th round, the second time without taking a punch. It was a clear sign of capitulation by the Puerto Rican, and the suddenly one-sided fight was stopped.

"Antonio always attacked, but the difference today is that he attacks a lot more," Capetillo said. "Antonio has been boxing for 15 years and he was going through a little lull. That spark came back after the Williams loss. Tony right now is in his moment, and it doesn't matter right now who it is he faces next."

Another possibility is the winner of the Mosley-Ricardo Mayorga fight or possibly IBF titlist Joshua Clottey, coming off his win over Judah.

Whoever it is, Team Margarito expressed a strong desire to have one more fight before the end of the year, possibly by mid-November.

"If I don't get Oscar, I have to look at unifying the belts and make everyone come to me," Margarito said. "That's the only choice I think I'll have for big-money fights. I don't think the money is there for another Paul Williams fight. Mosley may mean a little more money, but he's always said he doesn't want to fight me. Then there's always a chance to fight Cotto again. But do you think Cotto is really going to want to fight me again?"

And what of Cotto? The defeat crushed him. He left the ring quickly, was too distraught to speak with HBO afterward, and didn't attend the postfight press conference. Instead, he made a few brief comments to Top Rank's public relations people before withdrawing to his dressing room. He was eventually taken to the hospital and didn't arrive back at the MGM Grand until 4 a.m., wearing a hood pulled tightly over most of his bruised face.

For six rounds, Cotto was flawless. He juked, flashed a strong jab, landed combinations, and during one sequence late in the fifth round, made Margarito miss a five-punch combination. But he also fought at an exhaustive pace, and he had to

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

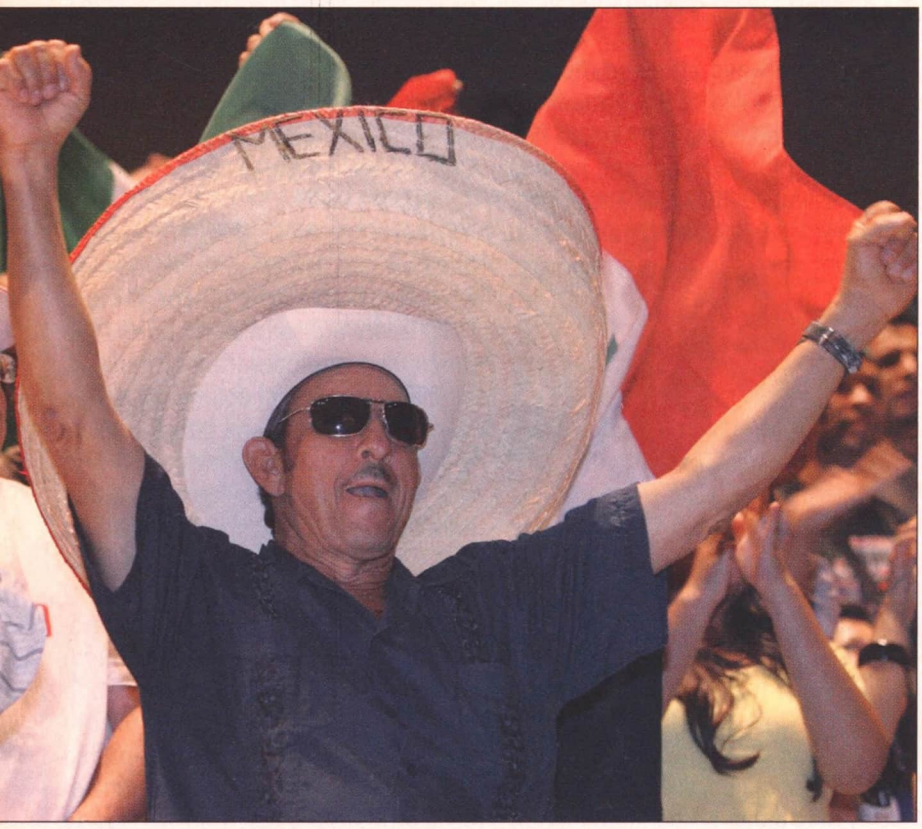

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Margarito celebrates his career-defining win (top), along with the thousands of Mexican and Mexican-American fans who showed up at the MGM Grand Garden Arena to cheer him on to victory.

be discouraged by the way Margarito walked through the clean shots he repeatedly crashed into Margarito's concrete head and iron jaw.

Cotto's face looked like a Jackson Pollock painting. Splattered blood dotted his face, from a bloody nose, cut left eye, and severely gashed lower lip. His skin was ashen and blotched. His bottom lip was scraped and raw. This is the condition Cotto usually leaves his opponents.

Whether or not he'll ever be the same remains a huge question. When Cotto's trainer and uncle, Evangelista Cotto, climbed the steps to throw in the towel at the 2:05 mark of the 11th round, tears trickled down Cotto's face. He knew it was the end and he never complained about the stoppage. In fact, he almost seemed to welcome it.

"Cotto has suffered a lot of punishment throughout his career, and that's when he won," Steward said. "That pounding eventually catches up to you. It caught up to Cotto this time. Who knows if he will ever be the same? He's a great fighter. He's very unappreciated. He's never dodged anyone. He didn't have to take this fight. But he's been busted up so many times, and the pain and anguish he's been through, that will get to you eventually."

"Life continues," a contrite Cotto said afterward through Top Rank. "It's not over for me. I'm going to take a long rest, then decide what to do next. This was Margarito's night. He did his job better than I did."

Besides his $1.5-million purse (plus an as-yet undetermined piece of the PPV revenue), Margarito gained something else: He got his people back!

"I felt pretty bad when I lost to Williams last year," Margarito said. "Not bad enough that I felt like retiring, but bad that I let down my people, my Mexican fans, and the people around me who believed in me. I let them down. But when I walked out of that ring after beating Cotto and saw all those fans there waiting for me, waiting to touch me, I knew I'd made them believe in me again." ■

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IS KELLY PAVLIK WALKING INTO A TRAP?

It's Not Easy To Beat Hopkins ... It's Even Harder To Look Good

By Don Stradley

The upcoming Bernard Hopkins-Kelly Pavlik bout is an intriguing match between an undefeated middleweight champion and a battle-tested veteran.That's usually a good formula, especially when the veteran is headed for the Hall of Fame. But the way Bob Arum announced the bout in July was rather odd.

"This fight was not our first choice, but it was the only alternative we had to make a buck," Arum said.

This is a poor way to sell a fight, especially considering the bout is a pay-per-view event and will need some promotion. Of course, Hopkins' camp, Golden Boy Promotions, will eventually do their share to sell tickets. They'll have to, after Arum's less than ringing endorsement.

Arum may have been too preoccupied with the Top Rank-promoted bout between Antonio Margarito and Miguel Cotto that was taking place a mere 10 days after the Pavlik-Hopkins was announced.

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

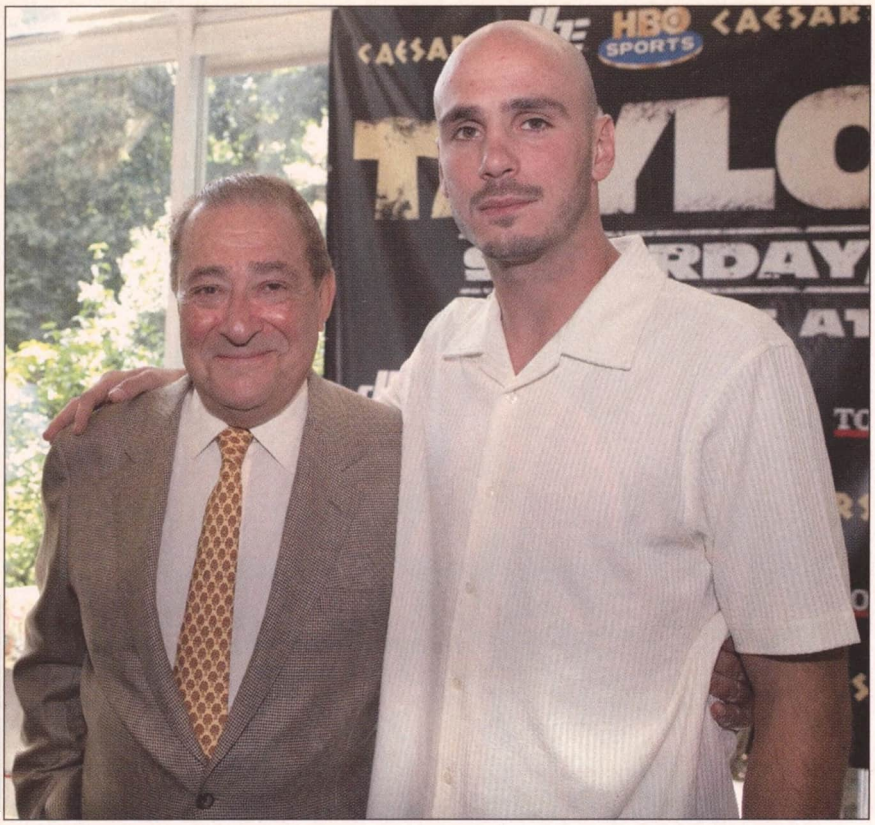


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Pavlik's promoter, Bob Arum, didn't sound very enthusiastic when he announced that Kelly would be fighting Hopkins in a non-title fight, which is strange considering the fact that it will be a pay-per-view fight and Arum is trying to turn a profit.

Or perhaps he was chewing over a proposed bout between Top Rank's Manny Pacquiao and boxing's golden ticket, Oscar De La Hoya. Either way, Arum should not sell Pavlik-Hopkins short, because even though it is a non-title bout fought at a catchweight, the bout is worth our attention. Jack Loew, Pavlik's trainer, certainly thinks so.

"I think it will be good fight," Loew said. "We're fighting a legend. I think he's [Hopkins] a great fighter and it will be an honor for us to fight him."

But to hear Arum tell it, Hopkins is just a tune-up.

"Kelly isn't thrilled with the fight," Arum said. "But one of the incentives he has is that if he's going to fight [Joe] Calzaghe after Calzaghe fights Roy Jones. It will be 168 pounds anyway. So it gets him ready for that fight."

Arum's lack of enthusiasm aside, this fight could serve as Pavlik's coming-out party. If he stops Hopkins, he'll forever be known as the man who finally sent "B-Hop" to the old fighter's rest home.

But 43-year-old Hopkins has spoiled

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

If Pavlik can land the same sort of punches against Hopkins that he did against Jermain Taylor, he could very well become the man who finally retires the "The Executioner." On the other hand, Hopkins is a far better defensive fighter than Taylor.

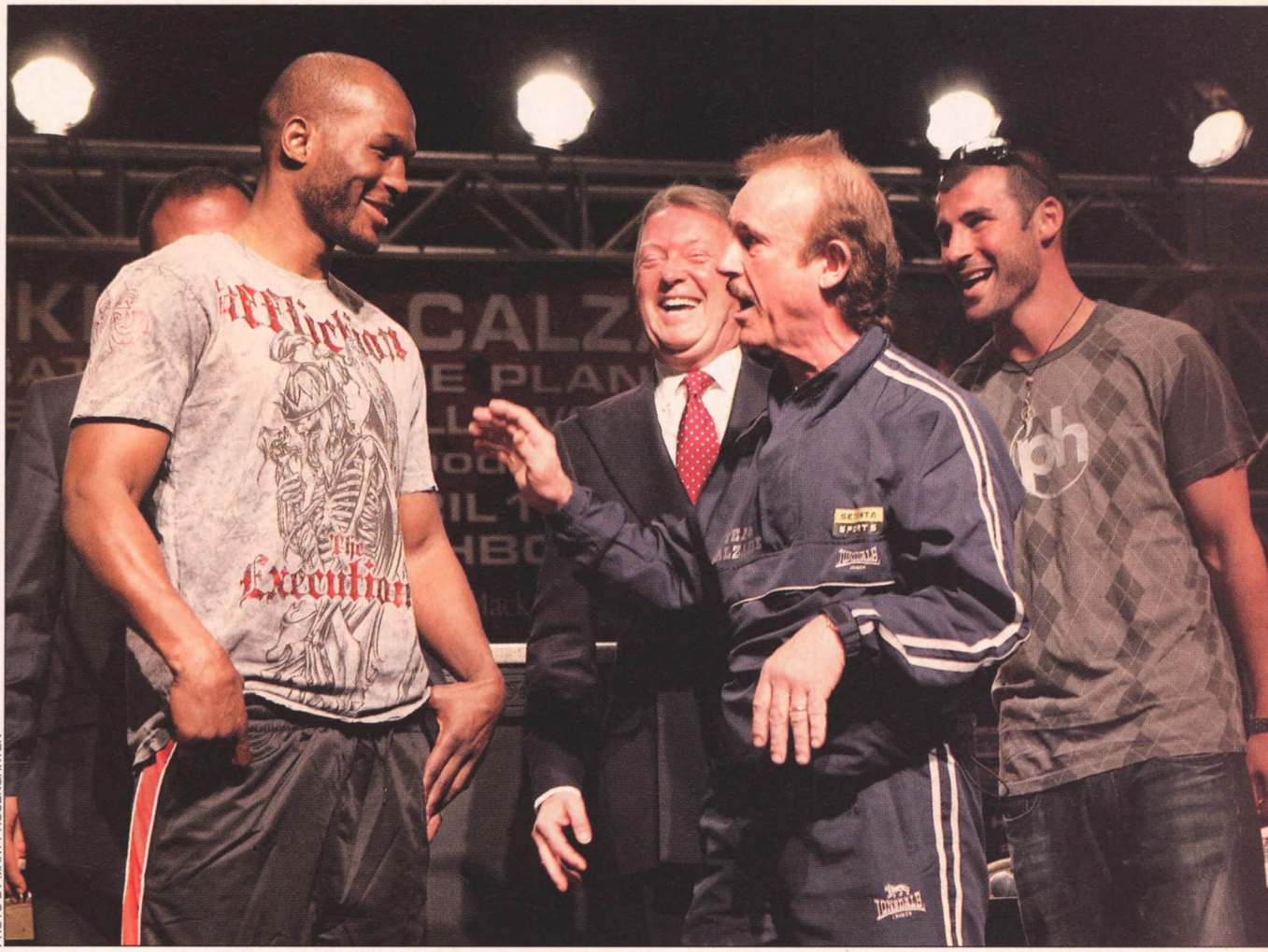


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Hopkins, promoter Frank Warren, and Joe Calzaghe all seem to be getting a kick out of whatever Enzo Calzaghe is saying to B-Hop. Although his son beat Hopkins, Enzo said he has no doubts that Hopkins will beat Pavlik.

a few parties in the past. Just ask Jermain Taylor and Joe Calzaghe.

Taylor owns two close decisions over Hopkins, but he never lived down the fact that he struggled with the then 40-year-old. Taylor left *his* coming-out party with a tarnished reputation. He never fully recovered.

More recently, Calzaghe won a squeaker over Hopkins. Calzaghe was hoping to leave American fans with a good impression, but hoary Hopkins knocked down the Welshman in the first round and nearly stole the fight. Calzaghe, like Taylor, did not enhance his stock.

In an interview with Setanta Sports, Calzaghe's father and trainer Enzo said, "Bernard Hopkins will beat Kelly Pavlik, I have no doubt about that. Pavlik could beat Jermain Taylor because he [Taylor] only had a Plan A. Hopkins has a Plan A, B, C, and D. Hopkins is a different class to Pavlik. Pavlik isn't in the class of a Roy Jones or a Joe Calzaghe. I'm not sure on the round, but I know Hopkins will take him to school."

Granted, Pavlik is a vastly different animal than Taylor or Calzaghe. Unlike Taylor, who occasionally loses his enthusiasm during fights, Pavlik will be coming forward consistently, firing his long-range combinations all night. And, unlike Calzaghe, whose hands are so brittle he can barely make a fist, Pavlik can punch effectively with either hand.

In a 2007 conversation with Doghouseboxing.com, Hopkins gave a sneak peak of how he might fight Pavlik.

"Those long arms need space to build power," Hopkins said. At the time, Hopkins was imagining a bout between Pavlik and Calzaghe, and he thought Calzaghe could win. "He gets in close, and would take away the range of Pavlik." That comment gives us a snapshot of what might happen October 18 in Atlantic City, with Hopkins fighting his way inside and denying the long-armed Pavlik room to punch. If that's the case, the weight issue takes on a new aspect, as Hopkins may try to smother Pavlik and muscle him around the ring.

Hopkins has fought three times at 170 or thereabouts, and he seems comfortable at the weight. Pavlik's rematch with Taylor was fought at 166, and his recent bout with Gary Lockett was contested at middleweight. Loew has given mixed responses when it came to the agreed-upon catchweight of 170.

Although he said that Hopkins is just a blown-up middleweight, Loew told *The Vindicator*, Pavlik's hometown newspaper, "I don't like the weight. I'd love to defend the title and force Hopkins to make 160 pounds." Then Loew turned philosophical. "We

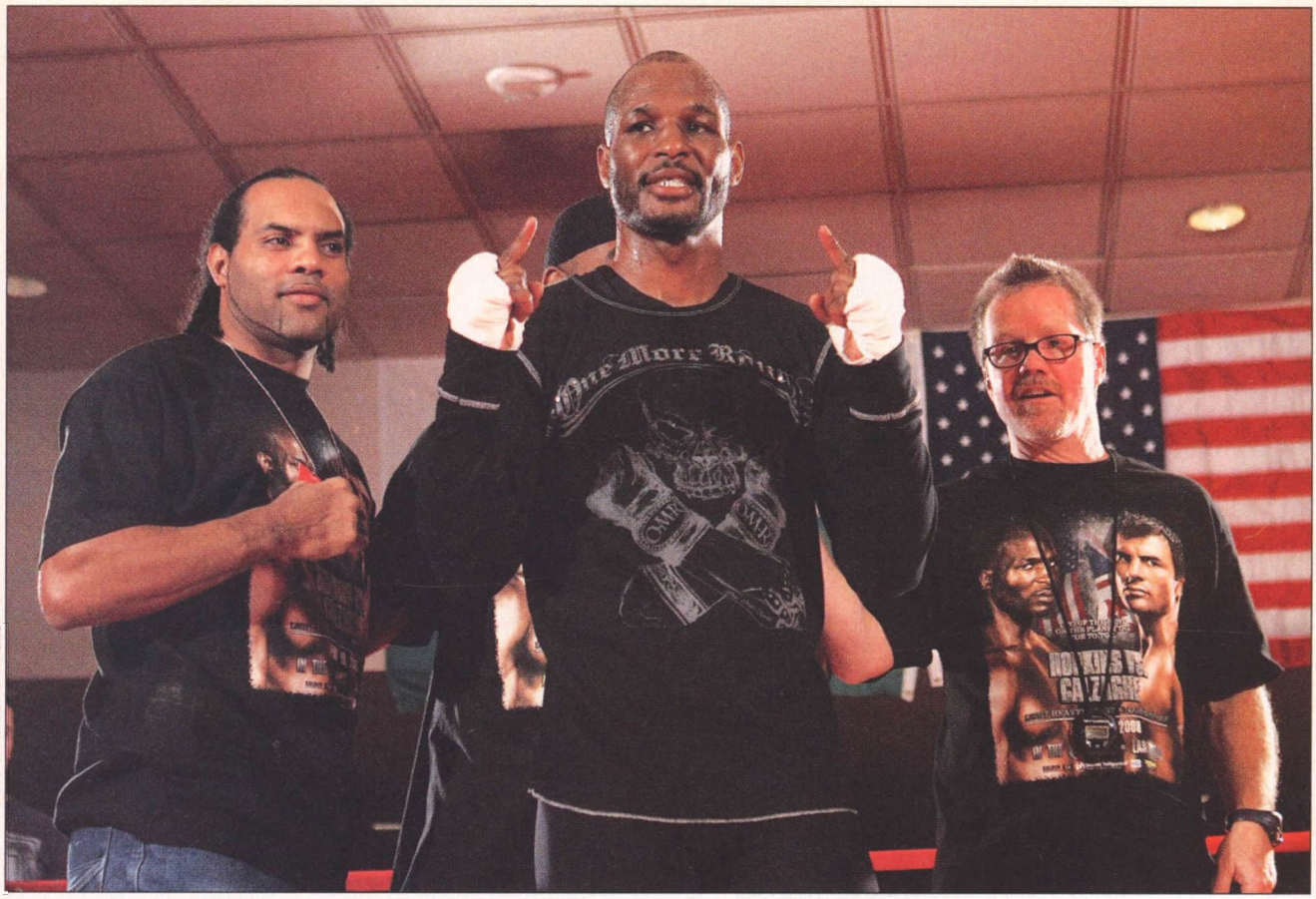


PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Freddie Roach, pictured to the right of Hopkins (that's co-trainer John David Jackson on the left), thinks that if Hopkins can fight as well as he did against Antonio Tarver, he could spring an upset against Pavlik. But Roach has also advised Hopkins to retire.

worked really hard to be in a position to fight guys like Bernard Hopkins and Joe Calzaghe. If it has to be at 170, hey, let's fight."

"Hopkins is a good fighter, but he's got a lot of flaws," Pavlik told *The Vindicator*. "He's not active enough for me. So he might get banged up a bit." Considering that Hopkins' favorite combination is a right lead followed by a headbutt, Pavlik is due to get banged up too.

"Bernard can surprise you," said Freddie Roach, who trained Hopkins for his bouts with Winky Wright and Calzaghe, but was not onboard for the Pavlik fight. Roach had suggested Hopkins retire after the loss to Calzaghe, and was surprised to hear Pavlik mentioned as Hopkins' next opponent.

"I thought it was a little odd," Roach told THE RING. "Pavlik is probably the toughest guy out there. He's young, strong, and applies a lot of pressure. He punches a lot harder than Calzaghe. But at this stage in Bernard's career, he wants this type of challenge."

There is the likelihood that Pavlik-Hopkins will turn into a typical Hopkins fight—messy, monotonous, and difficult to score. Still, there are many reasons to think Hopkins could pull this one out.

For one thing, no matter how old Hopkins is, he remains brilliant with his right hand. He throws it at different speeds; sometimes it's a fastball down the middle, sometimes it's a knuckleball with no juice on it. But generally, he finds the plate. "I'd like for him to throw the right hand more often," said Roach. "That's something we'd work on for Pavlik."

Hopkins' defense and counterpunching are still strong too. If Pavlik can't break through Hopkins' thorny protection, Pavlik may end up having to box, which favors Hopkins. Pavlik's vaunted right hand is most successful when an opponent stands and trades with him. The likelihood of Hopkins trading with Pavlik is about as slim as Paul Spadafora appearing next season on *The Bachelor*.

As for countering, Hopkins was a tad too slow to deal with Calzaghe's tactic of leaping in and pitty-patting. By the time Hopkins was ready to counter, Calzaghe had pulled out. But Pavlik will walk in with no intention of pulling out. That could mean Pavlik will be easier to counterpunch. Roach sees Pavlik as something like Antonio Tarver, another tall fighter who comes forward throwing lots of one-twos. "If Bernard fights the way he did against Tarver, he'll beat Pavlik," said Roach.

Also, Hopkins doesn't want to retire with the loss to Calzaghe as his last fight, and he certainly doesn't want two consecutive losses at the end of his record.

If that's not motivation enough, let's not discount plain, old jealousy. Hopkins has always upped his game when he resented his opponent's status. Hopkins may look at 26-year-old Pavlik with some of the same jealousy that fired him up for his bouts with Oscar De La Hoya and Felix Trinidad.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Pavlik's trainer, Jack Loew, also originally expressed reservations about a catchweight fight with Hopkins, saying he wished it could be at 160 pounds for Kelly's middleweight world championship.

After all, when Hopkins was 26, he was still fighting for short money. Nothing would please Hopkins more than to whip a fighter he perceives as a young upstart who hasn't paid his dues. Beating the man who beat Taylor would give Hopkins some satisfaction too.

Still, we wonder if Hopkins has finally learned from his mistakes. One of Hopkins' flaws is that, like a lot of reformed tough guys, he has a desire to prove how smart he is. Sometimes this works against him. Sometimes he could achieve more in the ring just by throwing punches. Roach agrees. "I don't know why Bernard does some of the things he does. He could've won all the fights he lost in recent years just by being busier."

But Roach isn't certain if Hopkins can change his ways.

"I'm afraid he might always be the cautious guy we see now," Roach said. Roach is still baffled by Hopkins' fade during the Calzaghe bout. "That's the reason I asked him to retire. From the corner, I could see that he was stronger than Calzaghe, and I think he could have knocked him out. But he acted like he was tired. He never explained to me what the problem was. I told him I wanted to figure out what happened, so we could prevent it from happening again. He wasn't tired in training. In fact, Bernard is very tough to handle in training, because he punches so hard. Just working the pads with him is hard work because he can punch. But in the actual fight he doesn't do it. I explained to him, if we work together again, we need to figure out why you had these problems in the later rounds."

He's old, he's little more than an eight-round fighter, and even his former trainer isn't sure about him. Still, Bernard Hopkins pushed to make this fight happen, and is willing to fight in Pavlik's adopted hometown of Atlantic City. For a fighter suspicious of judges to begin with, it's a surprising move. Hopkins may feel Nevada judges will never appreciate his style. Or maybe it's because, as part of Golden Boy Promotions, Hopkins had an exclusive promotional deal with the Borgata Casino and feels comfortable in the city by the sea.

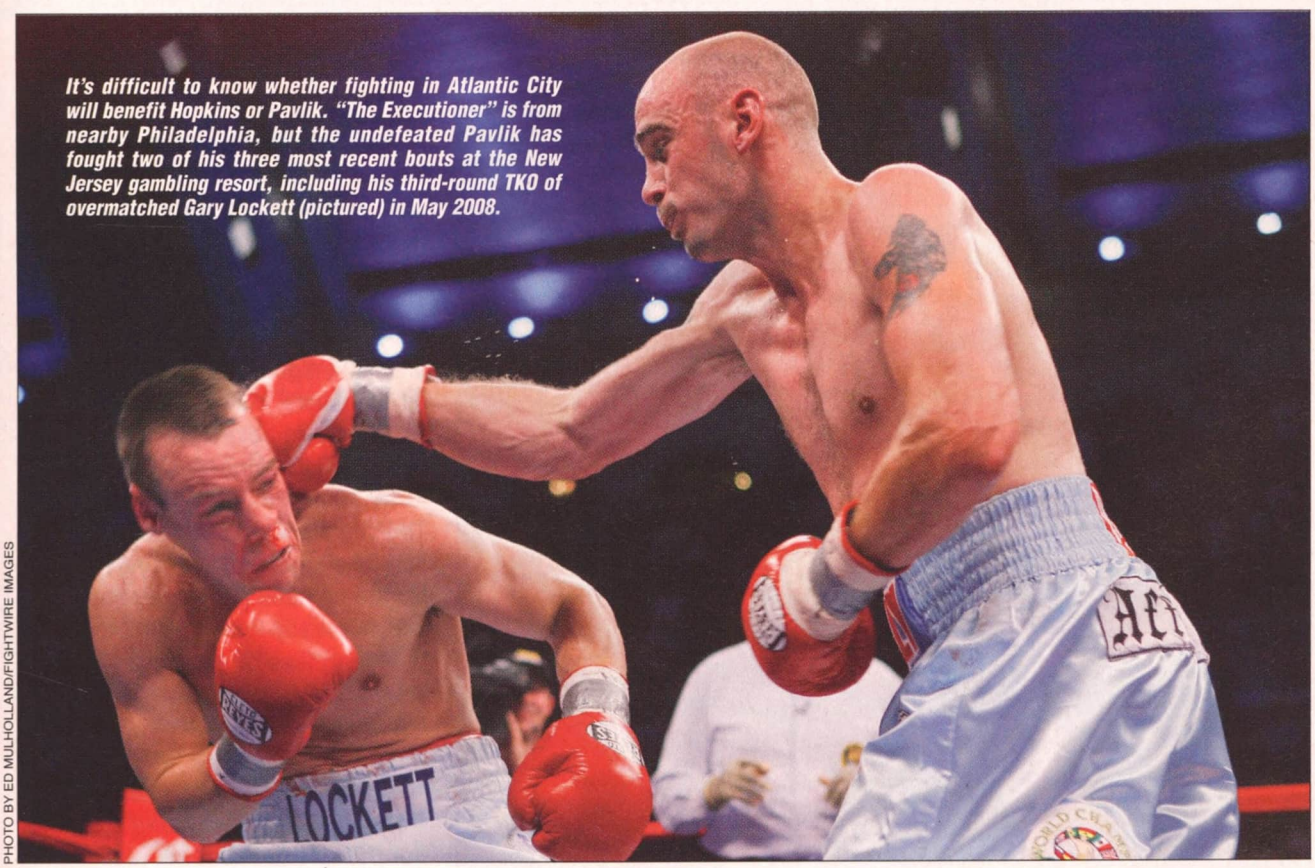


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

It's difficult to know whether fighting in Atlantic City will benefit Hopkins or Pavlik. "The Executioner" is from nearby Philadelphia, but the undefeated Pavlik has fought two of his three most recent bouts at the New Jersey gambling resort, including his third-round TKO of overmatched Gary Lockett (pictured) in May 2008.

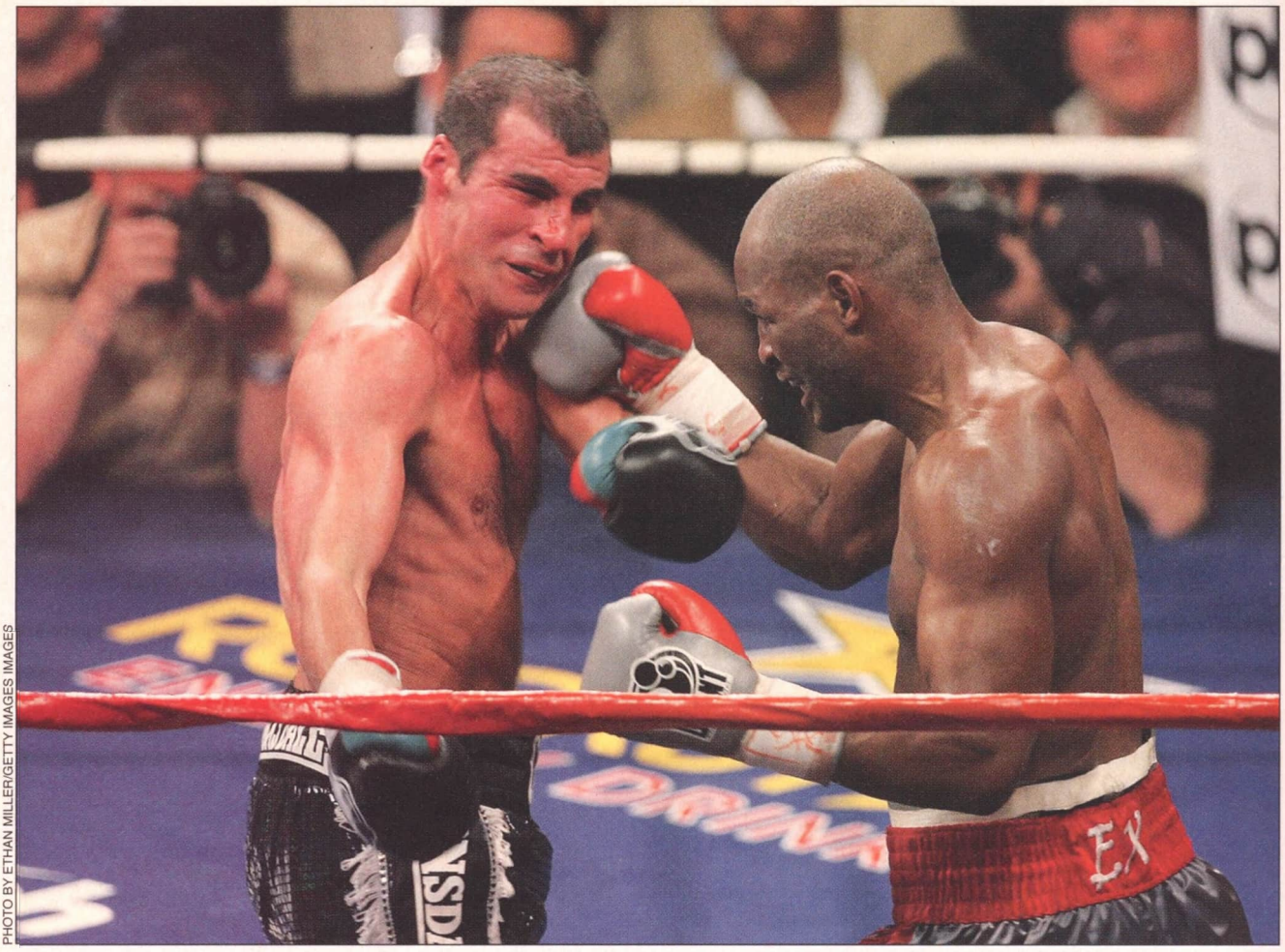


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES IMAGES

The two sides of B-Hop: Which Hopkins will surface against Pavlik, the slick veteran who floored Calzaghe with a sneaky right in the first round (above) or the mauling, stalling spoiler (below) who frustrates foes and fans alike?

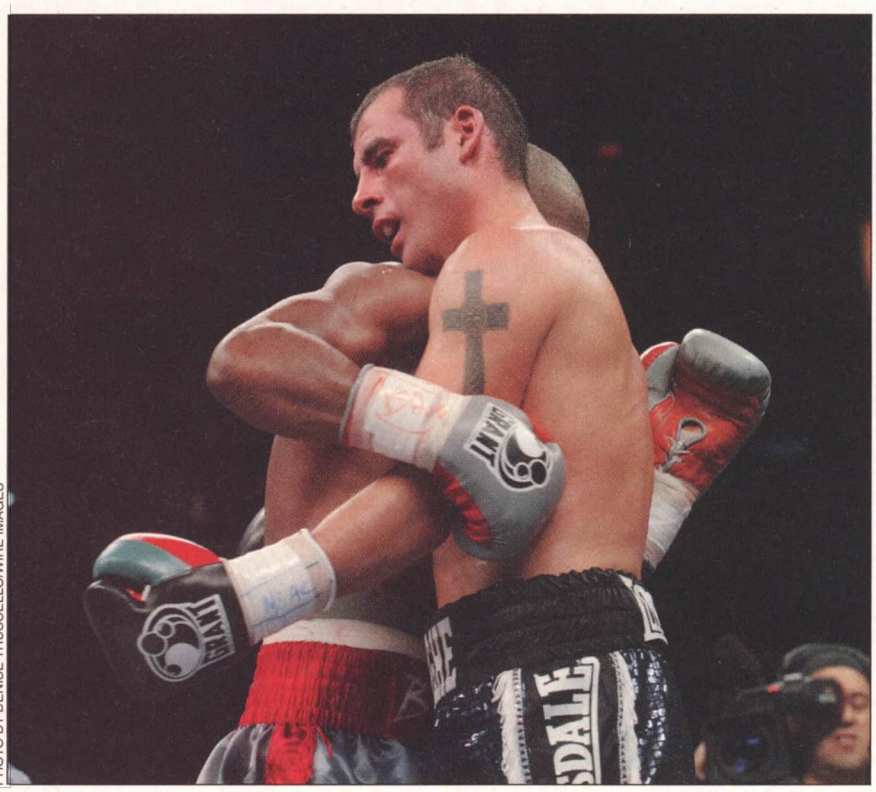


PHOTO BY DENISE TRUSCELLO/WIRE IMAGES

"Hopkins didn't want to fight in Las Vegas, for whatever crazy reason," said Arum. "We're very happy it's in Atlantic City. He's from Philadelphia, so his 200 fans will be able to drive down and watch the fight."

Arum may mock Hopkins right up until fight night, but there's something going on here. Maybe, as Max Schmeling once said before his first bout with Joe Louis, Hopkins "sees" something.

In 2002, Hopkins came to Felix Trinidad's adopted hometown of New York and thrashed the younger fighter. Maybe he sees Pavlik as another big puncher ready to be fleeced.

Regardless of what goes down in Atlantic City, Hopkins will prove he is nobody's tune-up. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to THE RING.

Special Analysis:

WHICH OF TODAY'S FIGHTERS ARE HEADED TO THE HALL?

By William Dettloff

One only had to witness or see film of Larry Holmes, the crankiest of all living former heavyweight champions, blubbering through his Hall of Fame induction speech in Canastota last June to recognize what it means to old pugs to be enshrined. Say what you will about the merit of some inductees, the Hall is one of the great rewards for old accomplished prizefighters who want, more than anything, to be remembered.

A pension would have been nice for these guys, and a health plan, too, and more than a couple would like some payback for old slights and insults. A new suit wouldn't hurt either. But since none of those are forthcoming, our beloved war-horses settle for a kind of immortality in Canastota, which, when you think about it, isn't really settling at all. Any kind of immortality is a sweet deal if you can get it.

About eight years ago, *KO* magazine, sister of THE RING, analyzed the boxing landscape toward predicting which of the fighters active at that time might be inducted. It also placed fighters in categories separated by the likelihood of their induction, or, in some cases, the remoteness. By the end, 59 fighters had been slotted into the following designations: "Sure-Shots," "Probable," "Maybe," "No Chance," "Too Soon to Tell (Probably)," and "Too Soon to Tell (Probably Not)."

In this feature, THE RING revisits that format using fighters pulled from today's landscape. But that's not all—we also bring you up to speed on every fighter who was included in that first piece, many of who are still active. For example, eight years ago, James Toney was seen as a "Maybe." Where does he fall today? How about Lennox Lewis, who the first time around was viewed as "Probable." The status of every fighter that was in the original section shows up here in the sidebars. Some are no more likely to get in now than they were eight years ago. Others are already polishing up their acceptance speeches.

One note before you get started: We at THE RING try to be realists, and that means recognizing that halls of fame in all sports are run by humans. Humans are prone to cronyism, politicking, nepotism, and who knows what else. Institutions are not perfect, nor should they be. They work like the real world, meaning if you're trying to get in, it helps if you're popular, if you have a few friends on the inside pulling for you, or are in some way well connected or especially marketable or have a good story. That's how people get jobs and promotions, and get out of speeding tickets and jury duty. Very few succeed anywhere solely on merit. So as you read our analyses and see us referring to a guy who has a "good story," or "nice angle," that's what we mean. Every little bit helps.

Sure-Shots

In every generation there are fighters that stand out from the rest, whose staying power and consistency at the highest levels show through time after time. Each of these fighters, we believe, is all but guaranteed a spot in the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

Manny Pacquiao

It seems unthinkable that 11 years ago, Pacquiao was getting beaten up and stopped in three rounds by Medgoen Singsurat in Thailand. When you look back on it, even his 2005 loss to Erik Morales is puzzling, and not just because of what he did to Morales in their second and third meetings. Pacquiao has established himself as such a terror in the ring, such a whirlwind of menace and ferocity that even when he looks vulnerable—as he did against Juan Manuel Marquez in their thrilling, bloody rematch last March—you get the sense that he could turn it on at any moment and end things. And all it would take is a little concentration. That hand speed, that punch, that right hook to the body. What more could you ask for in a fighter?

And he seems to be getting better. Sure, David Diaz was in way over his head, but the ease with which he was brutalized bordered on scary. That Pacquiao's victory earned him a belt in five different weight classes was almost irrelevant. What is relevant? That he's beaten Marco Antonio Barrera (twice), Marquez, Morales (twice), Oscar Larios, Jorge Solis, Lehlohonolo Ledwaba, Chatchai Sasakul, Jorge Julio, and Diaz. It's relevant that his success has started a boxing revolution in the Philippines, and it's relevant that you can make a strong argument that he, and not Flash Elorde any longer, is the best prizefighter the Philippines has ever produced. It's relevant that he's the best fighter in the world today pound-for-pound, and his powers are such that they got him a fight with Oscar De La Hoya—who has fought as high as 160 pounds—next time out. And guess what: He could win. Pacquiao in the Hall of Fame, first year he's eligible, is a no-brainer.

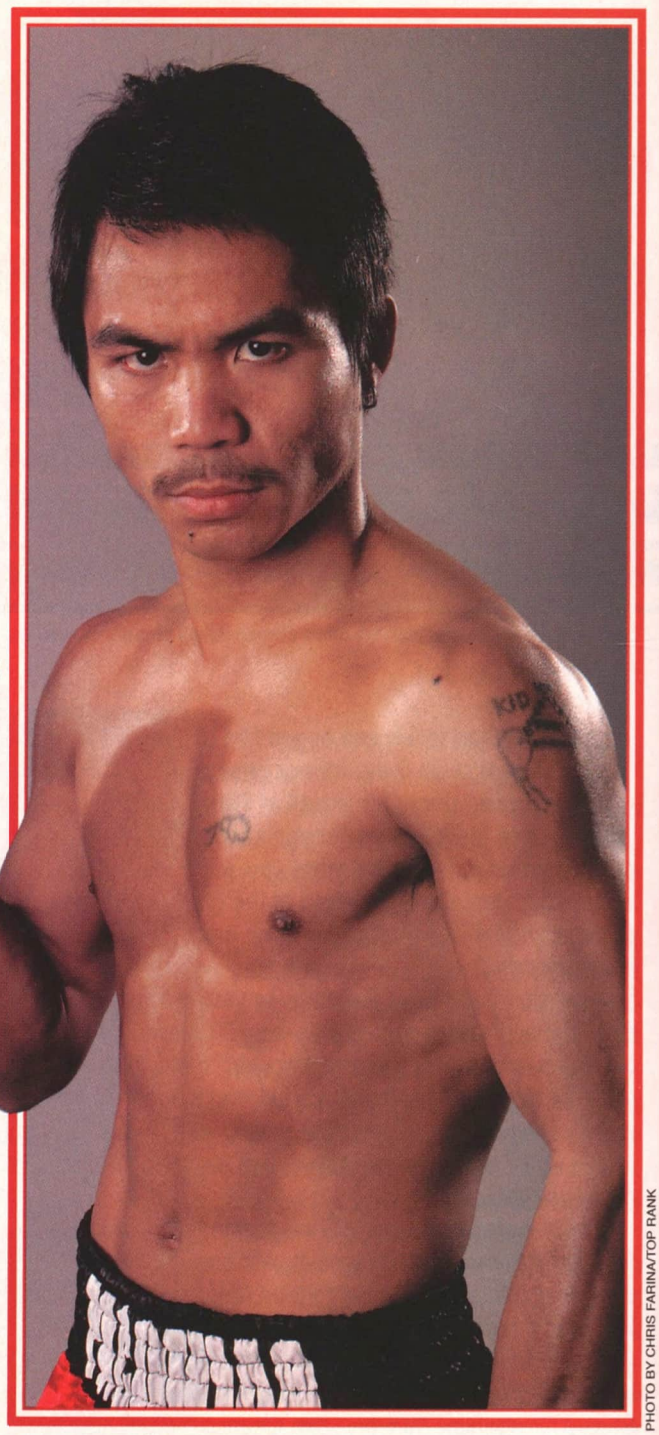


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Pacquiao could quit tomorrow and still be a first-ballot Hall of Famer

Joe Calzaghe

It sure did take a long time for us to be convinced, didn't it? Most of us outside the United Kingdom just didn't get Calzaghe until it was almost too late. The natural tendency of American fight fans to dismiss European ring heroes forced us to very nearly miss what our friends overseas have been telling us for 10 years about this guy. Now here it is, a fight or two away from his last ring appearance, and we're calling him a lock for the Hall of Fame. You can't

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Hatton at his rip-roaring best en route to kayo of Carlos Maussa

blame us for taking our time. Calzaghe's pre-Jeff Lacy days seemed all a farce to most of us, one run-of-the-mill, pasty-white European fighter after another falling at his feet, or another American has-been or never-was coming home with swollen eyes and tales of bad food and worse decisions.

Like it or not, we needed him to whip a high-quality (code for "American") fighter and for some of us Lacy was it. For others, even Calzaghe's jaw-dropping shutout of a young, undefeated powerpuncher was suspect; he made it look too easy. Lacy must have been worse than we thought. And when you hit a guy as much as he hit Lacy, shouldn't you be able to knock him out? Then came the win over the excellent Mikkel Kessler and we knew then, even if we didn't want to admit it, that our friends had been right all along, that the undefeated record was as good as it looked. The great Bernard Hopkins came next, and you can't say Hopkins was shot, not after what he'd done to Antonio Tarver and Winky Wright in recent fights. Now Calzaghe wants to go out with a win over another older American legend in Roy Jones and retire undefeated. Chances are he will. So yes, finally, he is a lock for the Hall of Fame. And he deserves to be.

Ricky Hatton

The easy rationalization to reach for, if you're not fond of Ricky Hatton, is his popularity exceeds his talent. That's not necessarily untrue, but it's not necessarily a bad thing either. All things considered, from a financial standpoint it's better to be wildly popular in this business than it is to be wildly good. Genius alone never filled an arena or broke a pay-pre-view record. Almost unprecedented popularity, the kind that compels thousands of rabid blokes to board airline jets and span several time zones to cheer on a fighter who has almost no realistic chance of winning is the kind of love everyone craves and very few achieve. Even the most brilliant would trade a little genius for the kind of adoration that followed Hatton to Las Vegas for his dramatic knockout loss to Floyd Mayweather. And it was no fluke. Hatton was doing huge numbers in Great Britain for years—why do you

think it took so long for Frank Warren to turn him loose on the top junior welterweights?

Which brings us to the matter of Hatton's worth not as a rock star, but as a fighter. And on that question it should be sufficient to note that right before Hatton beat Kostya Tszyu into retirement to win the world junior welterweight title, Tszyu blew out Sharmba Mitchell in a fight that solidified Tszyu's standing among the very best fighters in the world, pound-for-pound. No one was claiming Tszyu to be shot going into the Hatton fight. To the contrary, he appeared at the height of his powers. And Hatton mauled him so relentlessly that Tszyu quit on his stool. Jose Luis Castillo went even more quietly, and it wasn't until after Hatton made him look 74 years old that the notion occurred to everyone that Castillo had seen better days. Hatton won't make anyone forget Henry Armstrong, but he can fight after all, and is among the three most popular and likable guys in the sport. We can hardly wait for his induction speech.

Winky Wright

We can hear you already—how in the hell does a clever but light-punching, mostly defensive-minded, primarily conservative southpaw like Wright get in when throughout his career he was surrounded by harder punchers, flashier personalities, and bigger stars? Well, the same way Mike McCallum got voted into the Hall, and Holman Williams, and Jimmy Bivins, belatedly.

Wright didn't come into the pros with Oscar De La Hoya's amateur background or left hook, or Sugar Shane Mosley's nickname or speed, or with Felix Trinidad's almost suffocating popularity or power. He came in with arms long enough to protect his head and body at the same time, a lot of good instincts and ring smarts, and a truckload of determination.

He's never been at the top of the pound-for-pound list and many of his more important wins came late in his career (and, not insignificantly, later in his opponents' careers too). The facts remain: He has wins over two certain Hall

Sure-Shots Revisited

Who would have thought that eight years after **Evander Holyfield** appeared in the first "Sure-Shot" section, at 37 years old, that he'd still be chasing the dream? Bottom line: Marcus Rhode could stop him once a month for the next three years, and "The Real Deal" would still be a first-ballot shoo-in ... A stoppage loss in 2005 to Grover Wiley, of all people, was enough to convince the great **Julio Cesar Chavez** to call it a career at 43 years old. If his vote into the Hall isn't unanimous in 2010, the Boxing Writers Association of America should be disbanded ... Sometimes things go exactly as they should, even in boxing. It happened in 2007 when three living legends, **Pernell Whitaker**, **Ricardo Lopez**, and **Roberto Duran**, were all inducted at the same time ... Whether or not you know it, **Thomas Hearns** stopped one Shannon Landberg in 2006, so even if he'd announced his retirement right afterward (he didn't), he wouldn't be eligible for induction until 2011... **Orlando Canizales** fought for the last time in September 1999 and so was eligible for induction in 2004. That the all-time leader in bantamweight title defenses (16 over a six-year reign) hasn't been called up yet is surprising. We guess they had to save spots for Ingemar Johansson and Jose Sulaiman ... We predicted eight years ago that **Marco Antonio Barrera** probably would not get into the Hall, and **Erik Morales** probably would. They'll

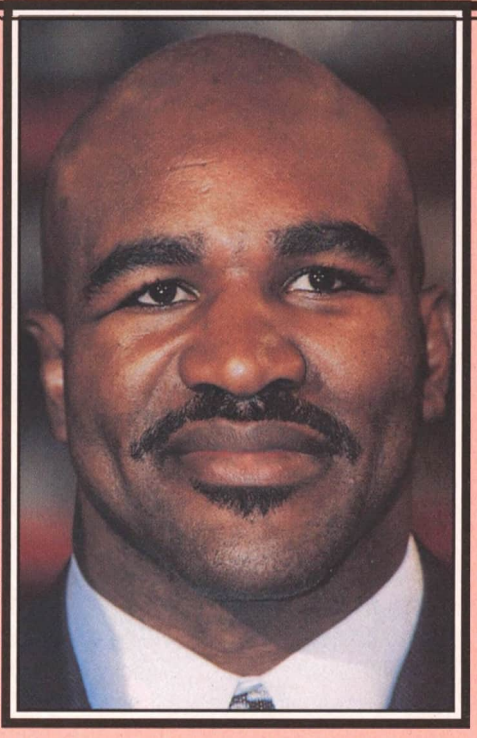


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Holyfield's a shoo-in ... once he retires

both be inducted—probably on the same day ... Depending on your taste, it either tickles or repulses you that the final entry on **Larry Holmes**' record will forever be "W 10 Eric Esch." Either way, "The Easton Assassin" is now in the Hall, where he belongs ... Last time we covered **Roy Jones** in this section, he was still the undisputed light heavyweight champion. A lot has happened since then, some good, mostly bad. No matter what happens against Calzaghe, Jones remains a lock ... **Bernard Hopkins**, a "Maybe" eight years ago, is a guarantee today with wins over high-profile stars and more title defenses than any middleweight in history ... As of this writing **Oscar De La Hoya** is just 7-4 since 2000, when he was seen as a "Probable" inductee. The biggest moneymaker in boxing history gets in. Period ... **Floyd Mayweather**, De La Hoya's partner in the richest fight ever, also ends up here based on his having won alphabet titles in four divisions and dominating, more or less, every opponent he faced as a pro ... Who thought we'd miss **Lennox Lewis** this much? A "Probable" eight years ago, Lewis seems better with each passing day. He is certain to be inducted ... No fighter as popular as **Felix Trinidad** gets denied the Hall, no matter how many comeback fights he loses.

of Famers in Mosley (who he all but shut out in their first meeting) and Trinidad (whom he did shut out, literally). He has a close and debatable loss to another probable Hall of Famer in Fernando Vargas, and a win over Ike Quartey, who could end up in the Hall too. He lost a competitive fight to certain inductee Bernard Hopkins, and drew with Jermain Taylor in a fight many thought he won. Throw in a handful of title defenses and you've got one of those dear, under-appreciated old throwbacks that everyone forgets about for the first few years after he's gone. Then some gray-haired purists perk up and ask how come that really smart southpaw never got in, and complain that the Hall isn't just for the punchers. It's for the great technicians too. That's when they'll call Wright's name.

Joel Casamayor

By the time you read this, Casamayor may well have lost the lightweight world title to the excellent Juan Manuel Marquez. If he has, and it was a clear victory for the Mexican, it will be the first time in his long career that Casamayor has been decidedly beaten. We know, some of you are right now smacking this page and shouting, "What about Jose Armando Santa Cruz!?" Calm down. All the great fighters in history have gotten gift decisions now and then, many of them more than once. The fact remains that, like Pernell Whitaker, Casamayor has lost a couple of times, but no one has clearly beaten him. Examine the three losses on his record: Jose Luis Castillo—split decision. Diego Corrales—split decision. Acelino Freitas—unanimous decision, but close and largely the result of two debatable calls made by referee Joe Cortez. You can easily find objective observers who will tell you Casamayor won each of these fights. He's fought at a very high level for 10 years, won titles in the junior lightweight and lightweight divisions, and beaten Roberto Garcia, Nate Campbell, Corrales, and Michael Katsidis, among others.

There's another reason Casamayor will be inducted, and it can't be discounted: his story. Casamayor is the most successful of the Cuban refugees who defected to the United States in 1996. The rest are either long gone or on their way out, but he is still, if not at the top of his game, good enough to give a lot of guys fits. Halls of Fame love stories like his, and it doesn't hurt his chances that there are just five Cuban-born fighters in the Hall today: Kid Chocolate, Kid Gavilan, Luis Rodriguez, Ultimino "Sugar" Ramos, and Jose Napoles. Casamayor will be the sixth. Count on it.

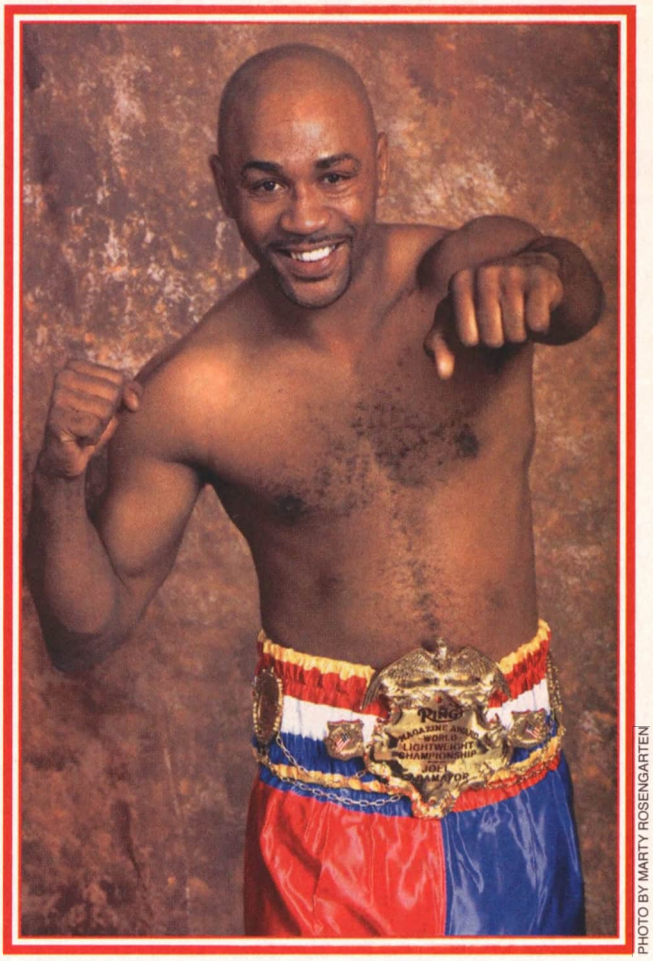


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Casamayor: The best of the Cuban expatriates

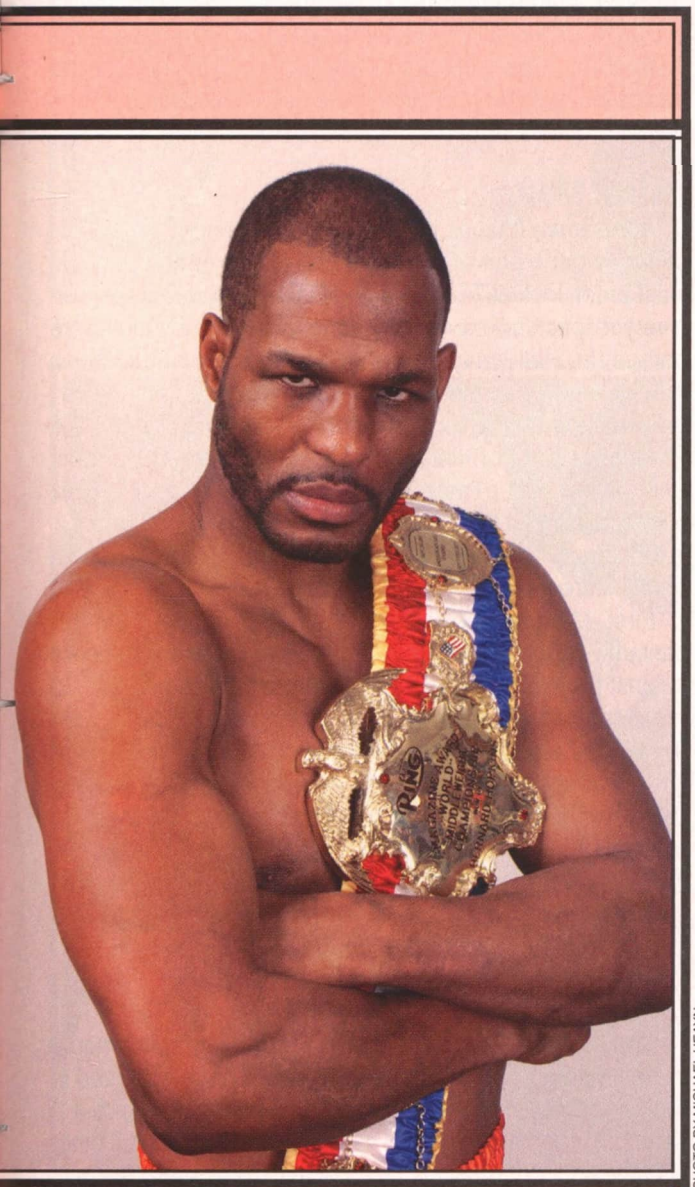


PHOTO BY MICHAEL HEAYN

There's no denying B-Hop's Hall of Fame credentials

Probable

The fighters in this category are not the certain inductees as are those in the previous section. Theoretically, they could do something to ruin or at least lessen their chances of induction. We think they have a very good chance of getting there regardless, so long as they avoid disaster.

Juan Manuel Marquez

Marquez was preparing to face lightweight champion Joel Casamayor as we went to press, and the outcome will go some way toward determining if he ends up in the Hall eventually. We think he's likely to whether or not he beats Casamayor, based largely on three fights: his win over Marco Antonio Barrera and his two historic battles with Manny Pacquiao. Both Barrera and Pacquiao are certain to be inducted as soon as they are eligible (see the "Sure-Shot" section), his record against them is 1-1-1, and both the draw and the loss to Pacquiao were highly debatable. The manner in which he performed in the first meeting, when he recovered from three first-round knockdowns to control much of the fight, only adds to his credentials.

It's unfortunate that Marquez couldn't or wouldn't fight the big fights when he was younger and fresher. Barrera and Erik Morales were the lighter-weight Mexican stars fighting one another and everyone else while Marquez was toiling in obscurity at the Great Western Forum in California. But he always could fight, and with a greater degree of skill than his Mexican counterparts. The losses to Freddie Norwood and especially Chris John hurt, but at this writing he's just two victories away from 50 wins, a benchmark only the best fighters today achieve. And he's not done yet. He chased Pacquiao into the lightweight division and if he gets him again, his chances of getting into the Hall only improve. And we think they're pretty good already.

Israel Vazquez

If there was a special wing in the Hall just for the most exciting fighters, a bust of Vazquez would be in there, alongside those of Diego Corrales, Arturo Gatti, and Micky Ward. We can't remember the last time he was in a boring fight. The three wars with Rafael Marquez are already legendary and will be responsible more than anything else if he gets inducted someday, as we suspect he will. The come-from-behind kayo of Jhonny Gonzalez was only slightly less dramatic. The good thing is we should expect more of the same, as Vazquez has not retired, has presumably many good fights ahead of him, and possesses all the ingredients an all-time exciting fighter needs: a monstrous punch, tissue-paper-thin skin around his eyes, an average defense, and a world of heart.

The world junior featherweight champion is not without shortcomings, of course. He'd be no fun if he weren't vulnerable. Remember, this is the guy who lost to Ulises Flores, Marcos Licona, and Oscar Larios. He's no manufactured pretty boy with perfect teeth and perfect English. The scar tissue around his eyes looks like it could erupt in the middle of an interview, the way a real fighter's eyebrows should. There are those who questioned his heart because of the way he surrendered in the first match with Marquez, but he answered those questions in the rematch, and then especially in the third meeting. Vazquez doesn't have a long title reign yet or any certain inductees on his record. But he's likely to get in based on the goose bumps he gives us, the value of which cannot be discounted.

Rafael Marquez

Sometimes it takes little more than a historic three-fight series to get a pair of fighters into the Hall of Fame. If you want proof, look at Tony Zale and Rocky Graziano. Zale had a very respectable career, Graziano a lesser one, but they're both in the Hall today almost solely because of the magic they created when they got into a ring together. (If you don't believe that's the reason, try to name off the top of your head three guys each of them beat besides the other. We'll bet most of you can't.) The same will probably work for Marquez and Vazquez, but despite Vazquez' 2-1 edge in their series, it is Marquez who would have a better shot at induction if both of their careers ended today. Why?

First, Marquez had a nice, three-year reign as the IBF bantamweight titleholder, during which he made six defenses against pretty serviceable opposition, including two against the respected (if outsized) Maurico Pastrana. Plus, he won the title by stopping the highly regarded Tim Austin. That goes a long way. Plus, he has an unusual selling point: a big brother who's also likely to get in. The Brothers Marquez are thought by many to be the most successful brother duo in boxing history. You couldn't ask for a better angle when pitching his induction. And if he should beat Vazquez in a fourth meeting? Forget it. He'll be a lock.

Chris Byrd

You can question Byrd's significant accomplishments at heavyweight, how much success he'd have achieved in a different era, or why anyone should have cared about a heavyweight who couldn't hit hard enough to knock out other good heavyweights. But you probably can't question the guts it took to take his middleweight body, turn it into that of a small

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHOWTIME

Their sensational trilogy alone will probably earn both Vazquez and Marquez plaques in Canastota

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Byrd claims the IBF heavyweight title with a decision over Holyfield in 2002

heavyweight, and climb into the ring with today's behemoths. That will be Byrd's selling point, as it always has been: that he was an average-sized man in a land of giants and he not only held his own, but did pretty well for himself. Consider some of his victims: Vitali Klitschko, Jameel McCline, David Tua (in what was probably a Hall of Fame performance in itself), and Evander Holyfield. All bigger, established, hard-hitting heavyweights.

On a certain level, Byrd's little-guy status helped him. You can't really hold against him having twice been beaten to a pulp by the hulking Wladimir Klitschko, or starched by Ike Ibeabuchi. What could he have done? He's a little guy! That Byrd was willing to fight anyone certainly helps his cause, as does the fact he is known in boxing circles as a genuinely nice guy. People like that. They might as a result help you accomplish things they might not otherwise. Things like getting on ballots. Yes, Byrd is a very probable Hall of Fame member because of what he did in the ring and also because of how he lives his life outside of it.

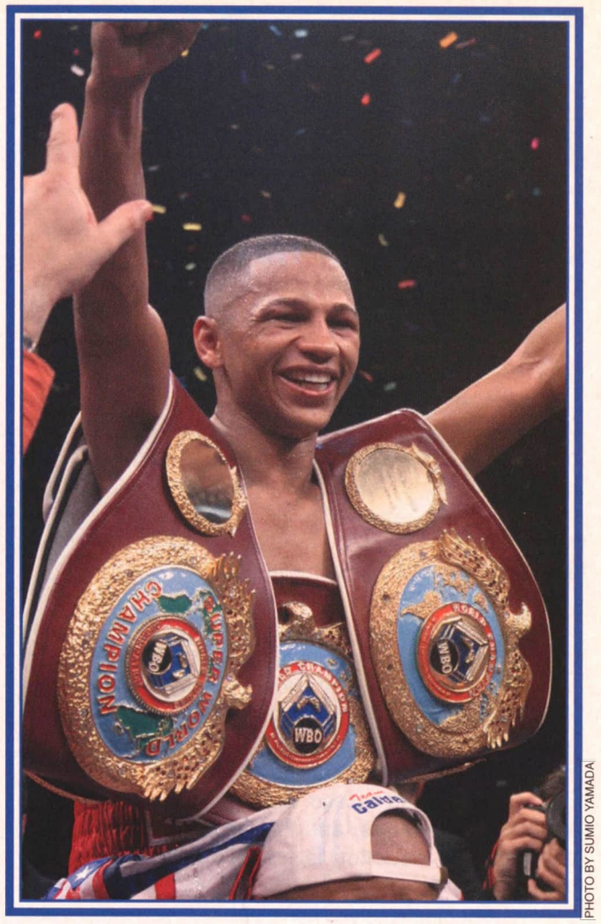


PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Voters will probably overlook Calderon's lack of punching power

Ivan Calderon

It's not the easiest thing in the world for a tiny fighter to get into the Hall of Fame. Only the best do it, and they'd better have some kind of gimmick or unusual shtick or angle if they're going to have a shot. Calderon has such an angle: He can't hit. Not even a little. Not even for a guy who fits in among the horse-jockey set. He has only six knockouts in 31 wins, for cripes sake. So how does he do it? How has he remained undefeated in 31 fights? By being the best pure boxer in the world, bar none (especially since Floyd Mayweather retired).

Calderon has had his scary moments. He managed just split-decision wins over Hugo Cazares (in their first match; the rematch will have taken place by the time you read this), and Ronald Barrera. But most of the time watching a Calderon fight is like watching the Harlem Globetrotters playing the Washington Generals. The typical scores in a Calderon title defense: 120-108 three times, or 118-109 across the board. We don't know if many guys grow up dreaming of becoming junior flyweight world champion, but Calderon has done it. He is one sweet-boxing, tiny little fighter, which is just enough of a rarity that if he keeps doing what he's doing, he's got a heck of a shot at getting to the Hall.

Probable Revisited

One-time 154-pound king **Terry Norris** last fought in 1998, and was a deserving inductee in 2005. The Hall and the voters rightly overlooked his bad temper and suspect chin (the two led to several disqualifications and stoppage losses) and inducted him on the basis of his 16 defenses of the junior middleweight title and the considerable amount of time he spent at the top of the pound-for-pound list … Given the Hall's history of inducting figures of highly questionable character, we should feel at ease predicting that **Mike Tyson**'s various antics and insults over the years will be overlooked come 2010, when, assuming he never fights again, he becomes eligible—right? Not necessarily. Tyson's transgressions, too numerous to recount here, were very public and, importantly, some occurred in the ring (such as the ear-biting incident). He'll probably get in, but who knows what could happen between now and 2010? Nothing's a certainty with this guy … Despite realizing somewhat mixed results over the last eight years, **Oscar De La Hoya** has moved on to the "Sure-Shot" section, as have the last undisputed heavyweight champion, **Lennox Lewis**, and Puerto Rican icon **Felix Trinidad** … Nobody knows from day-to-day if **Johnny Tapia** will be above ground, never mind be seen fighting again. He remains a likely but uncertain inductee … **Michael Carbajal** made good on his promise to retire after upsetting Jorge Arce in 1999, and was rewarded for that and a lot more with induction in 2006 … **Hector Camacho** is still fighting, and the more wins he racks up against nonentities, the better his record looks. His big-fight losses will always haunt him, but they probably won't prevent his induction … Outside of a pair of wins over Oscar De La Hoya (the second of which was controversial), **Shane Mosley** hasn't accomplished all that much since we characterized him as a "Maybe" eight years ago. He moves into this section anyway, based on longevity, his wins over a mostly shot **Fernando Vargas**, and his sheer likeability … It'll drive the purists crazy, but both **Arturo Gatti** and **Virgil Hill** also graduate from "Maybe" to "Probable," though for different reasons; Gatti for the Micky Ward fights and his popularity, Hill for his surprising longevity … Along those same lines, Vargas moves from the "Too Soon to Tell (Probably)" section all the way to here because, although he failed in his biggest fights—against Trinidad, De La Hoya, and Mosley—he got good work done and elicited such loyalty and passion from fans that keeping him out just wouldn't feel right … Making that same jump in class is **Kostya Tszyu**, whose two long reigns at the top of the junior welterweight division are very likely to get him in.

PHOTO BY ELIOT SCHECHTER/GETTY IMAGES

Tszyu hammers Miguel Angel Gonzalez to win the WBC junior welter belt

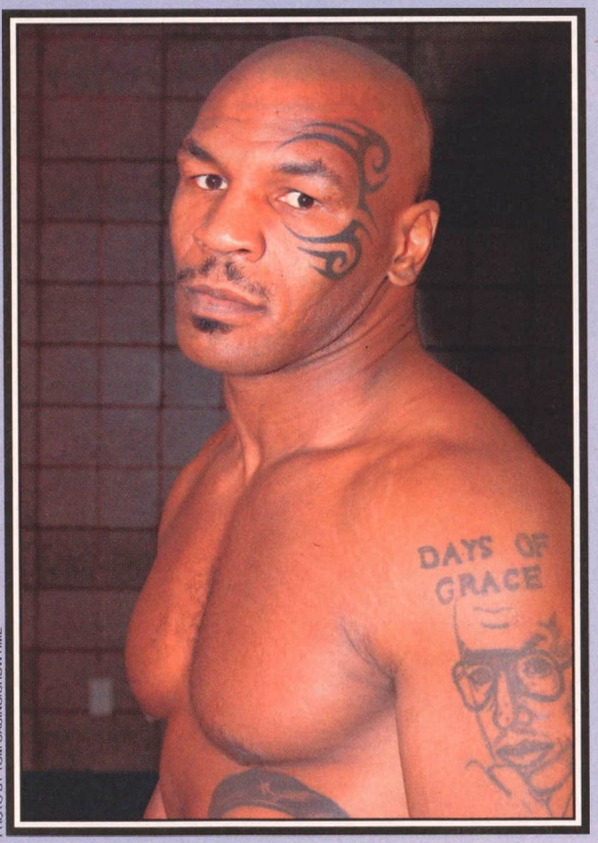


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

You never know for sure with Tyson

Maybe

If you want to know who the true fence-sitters are, go no further than here. Maybe these guys make it. Maybe they don't. Some of them have already done everything they can do to get in and have to keep their fingers crossed for a lucky break. Others have the possibility yet of shaping their future.

Vernon Forrest

Based on his recent performance against Sergio Mora, and whether or not he gets by Mora in their rematch, Forrest has already accomplished all he's going to at the upper levels of the sport. And what are those accomplishments? Two wins over Shane Mosley when Mosley was considered, pound-for-pound, the best fighter in the world. Really, that's most of it. We imagine you can throw in the wins over Carlos Baldomir and Michelle Piccirillo and even the controversial points victory over Ike Quartey. All were nice, especially as they occurred after Forrest's prime had passed. But his shining moments, and the basis for his induction is his back-to-back wins over Mosley, a very probable inductee.

That those gargantuan wins were followed by disastrous losses to Ricardo Mayorga hurts Forrest's chances. Plus, he doesn't have much to fall back on prior to the wins over Mosley. Victories over Raul Frank, Ray Oliveira, and a used up Vince Phillips do not a Hall of Fame resume make. His supporters could try to make the case that his resume lacks the biggest names because no one wanted to fight him. It might even be true to some extent, and it worked to get Mike McCallum inducted. Whether it will work with Forrest we just don't know.

Antonio Tarver

Like Forrest, Tarver stakes most of his case on successes against a single fighter—in his case Roy Jones. In that respect, Tarver's case is stronger than Forrest's because Jones is a dead-on lock to be inducted. So with two wins over a sure-shot, why isn't Tarver at the very least a probable inductee? Because he got his head handed to him by Bernard Hopkins. And by Eric Harding.

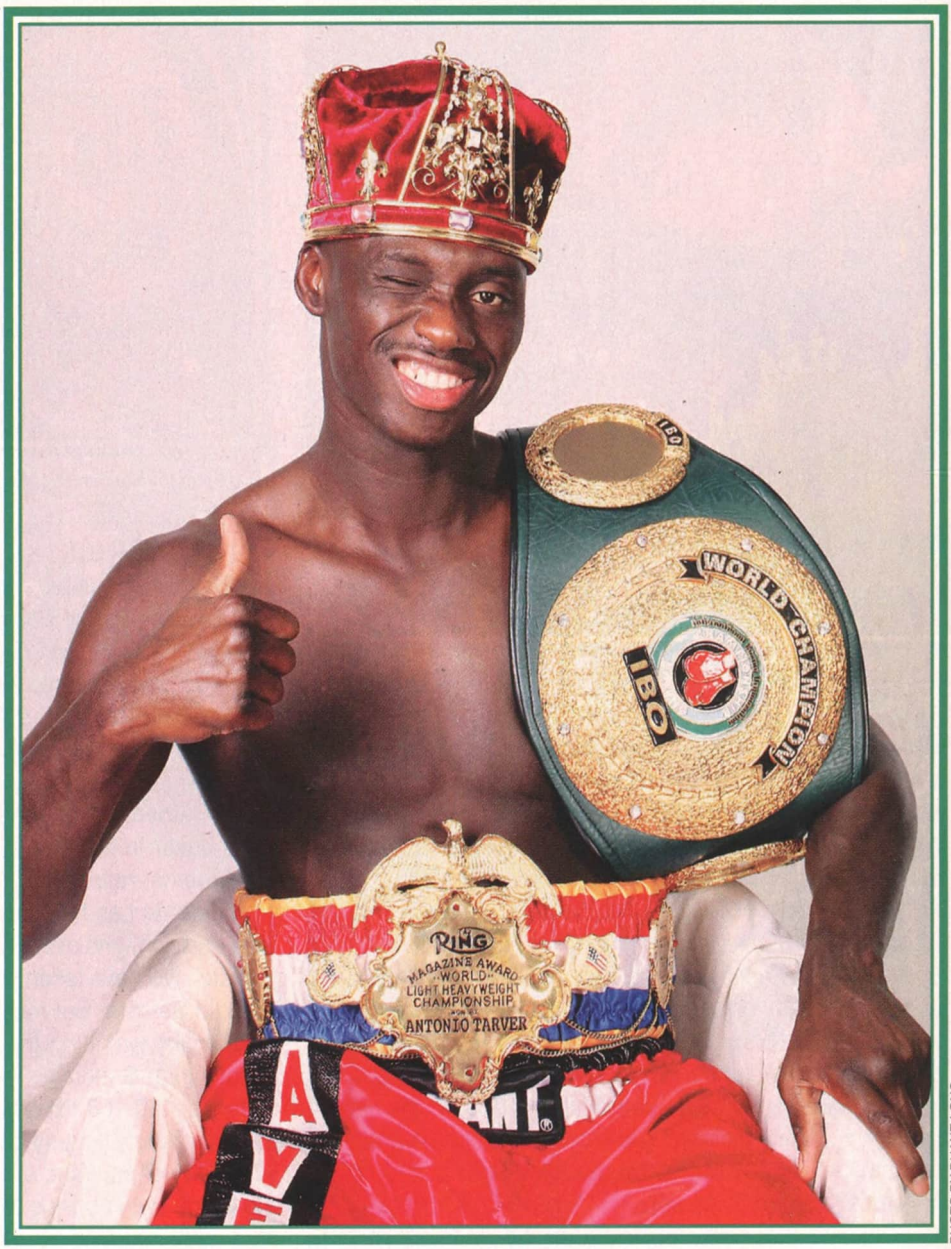


PHOTO BY DUANE LONG

Does Tarver need to regain the light heavyweight throne to get to Canastota?

PHOTO BY THOMAS LOHNES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Byrd feels the full force of Klitschko's right hand

And he split two fights with Glen Johnson. None of those failings is unforgivable; Hopkins will be inducted the moment he's eligible and Harding and Johnson were tough, hard-nosed, top-rated fighters. But if you lose to all three of them and still want a very good chance at getting into the Hall, you better have a packed resume otherwise. And Tarver doesn't.

Yes, he beat Reggie Johnson. And Harding in a rematch. And Montell Griffin. Go ahead and throw in Clinton Woods if you think it will help. It doesn't. What would? A win over Chad Dawson, whom Tarver is scheduled to face on October 11 in Las Vegas. A win over Dawson goes a long way toward moving Tarver out of the "Maybe" league and into "Probable."

Mikkel Kessler

It's been easy to forget about Kessler since his loss to Joe Calzaghe in November of 2007. He's elicited mostly derision, first for backing out of a fight with Edison Miranda and then for claiming one of the numerous WBA super middleweight title belts by beating one Dimitri Sartson in Denmark. But he really should not be underrated. He's relatively young, just 29 years old, and with Calzaghe saying he's going to retire after another fight or two, there will be plenty of time left for Kessler to clean up on Calzaghe's leftovers. Plus, it's no embarrassment to lose to Calzaghe, whose Hall of Fame induction is assured.

That's looking forward. There's plenty of good stuff in Kessler's past too: wins over Librado Andrade, Tony Mundine, Markus Beyer, and Eric Lucas, and unification of two of the three alphabet titles at 168 pounds. It was easy to make the case before the Calzaghe fight (and many made it) that it was Kessler, and not Calzaghe, who had fought the better competition. If Kessler never wins another fight, then no, talk of him getting in the Hall is silly. We think there's a good chance he'll return to the top of the division once Calzaghe is gone, and if he stays around a while, he's a very solid "Maybe."

Wladimir Klitschko

Right now you're asking, "How the hell could anyone think a bum like Klitschko could ever get into the Hall?" Or you're saying, "What do you mean maybe? He should be a sure-shot!" Such is life with Klitschko, who elicits either worship or ridicule. Klitschko's supporters will point to his current alphabet reign—currently at five defenses and counting, along with his universally accepted status as the world's best heavyweight. They'll note also his 51 pro victories, his wildly successful amateur career, and his wins over Chris Byrd (twice), Sam Peter, Jameel McCline, Calvin Brock, and Sultan Ibragimov, all top guys when Klitschko beat them. There's a lot of good stuff there.

The opposition will point to three fights: the kayo losses to Ross Purrity, Corrie Sanders, and Lamon Brewster. They also could throw in one from the other side, the win over Peter, when Klitschko was floored three times by glancing blows. Klitschko's near legendary caution won't help him get in. Remember, exciting fighters get the benefit of the

doubt—giant sculpted ones who appear afraid to open up generally do not. Call us kooky. But then, Lennox Lewis also was frequently derided for being too cautious. You could go either way with Klitschko. Which is why we're going right down the middle.

Arthur Abraham

This might surprise some American fight fans, who got their first look at Abraham when he blew out Edison Miranda in their rematch in June. But to our friends overseas, especially in Germany, "King Arthur" is a star. Seven defenses of the IBF middleweight title has made him a household name and given him a good jumping-off point for the Hall. He's slated to face comebacking Raul Marquez in October for the IBF's 160-pound title and a win there only helps his chances. A loss all but destroys them.

Here's what does not help him: Elvin Ayala, Wayne Elcock, Khoren Gevor, Sebastian Demers, Shannan Taylor, Kofi Jantuah, and Kingsley Ikeke. Those are the guys against whom Abraham defended the middleweight belt and there's probably not a less impressive string of challengers in the sport. This isn't all Abraham's fault; he's not exactly in a talent-laden division. But he could do better. In fact, he has to. Joe Calzaghe didn't explode into the American fight consciousness until he beat Kessler and Hopkins. Abraham needs wins against guys who carry the same kind

Maybe Revisited

The past eight years wrought significant changes in this category. **Arturo Gatti**, **Virgil Hill**, and **Shane Mosley** moved to "Probable," while **Bernard Hopkins** jumped all the way to "Sure-shot." Pity **Naseem Hamed**, **Vuyani Bungu**, and **Danny Romero**, who all get demoted to "No Chance" ... If **James Toney** would stop with the steroids already, he'd have graduated from this designation long ago. The reversal of his win over John Ruiz was particularly damaging. His longevity and wins over Vassiliy Jirov (for a cruiserweight belt) and Evander Holyfield, when coupled with the titles he held at middleweight and super middle, keep him in the running. But at this point, he'll have to throw himself on the mercy of the voters ... One-time flyweight and junior bantamweight titleholder **Mark Johnson** looked destined for a stay at the Hall until a prison stay and then old-age derailed him. He's a solid "Maybe," but a maybe nonetheless ... **Stevie Johnston** would have done himself a big favor by retiring, at the latest, after Juan Lazcano stopped him in 2003. Subsequent kayo losses to second-raters keep him from improving his chances, as the body of work he put together in his prime is solid but unspectacular ... It's hard to imagine that **Simon Brown** wouldn't be right in the thick of things at welterweight today. Considering his long reign at the top of a talented late-1980s welterweight class, plus his brief stint as WBC junior middleweight titlist. There are far worse picks ... Despite a reasonably successful comeback, **Ike Quartey**'s controversial loss to Vernon Forrest, which was followed by a less controversial one to Winky Wright, prevent him from getting past the "Maybe" designation ... **Saman Sorjaturong** ended his career by losing five of his last six fights, three by kayo, enough to keep him stuck in this category ... **Diego Corrales**, who landed in the "Too Soon to Tell (Probably Not)" category eight years ago, gets promoted to "Maybe," based entirely on two factors: his violent and premature death at age 29, and his thrilling stoppage of Jose Luis Castillo in their first fight, in 2005, which should get its own wing at the Hall ... He wasn't the greatest fighter ever and received the benefit of the doubt in too many close bouts, but former junior featherweight champion and WBA bantamweight titleholder **Paulie Ayala** is so damn humble and likable, we can see him getting in ... Promoted from the same rank as Corrales is **Rosendo Alvarez**, who, post-2000, went 10-2-1 with the losses coming to rival Beibis Mendoza by disqualification, and by kayo against a much bigger, younger Jorge Arce in Alvarez' final fight ... It's true that **Vinny Pazienza** did almost nothing to shore up his Hall of Fame credentials after bleeding his way into the "No Chance" category eight years ago; he went 4-2 (even if the losses were to respectable opposition in Aaron Davis and Eric Lucas). But he is a likable and entertaining guy and despite some legal troubles, he's tremendously popular in the Northeast. Who knows? Stranger things have happened.

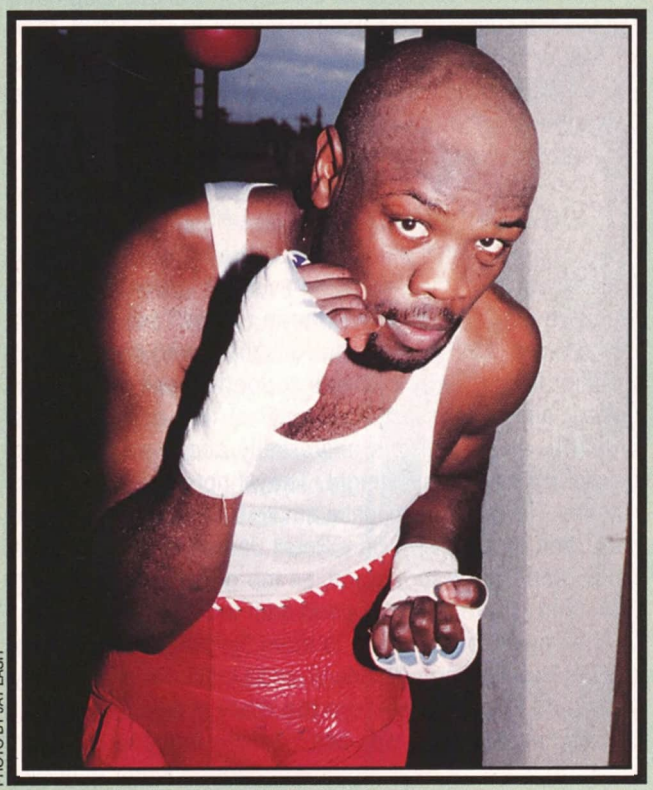


PHOTO BY JAY LASH

Hard-hitting Brown won titles at two weights

PHOTO BY HOLM ROEHNER/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

"King Arthur" needs better opposition to guarantee enshrinement

of leverage. Miranda was a good enough start. A win against Kelly Pavlik would be even better.

Felix Sturm

It's probably a disservice to Sturm that in America he's recalled mainly as the guy who was ripped off against Oscar De La Hoya in June 2004, when an ill-prepared "Golden Boy" tested the waters at middleweight before challenging Bernard Hopkins. Sturm has built quite a nice little career for himself outside of his tussle with De La Hoya. At this writing, he's made four defenses of the WBA middleweight title and beaten, among others, Javier Castillejo, Hacine Cherifi, Bert Schenk, Robert Frazier, Randy Griffin, and Maselino Masoe. Really, that's no more impressive than is Abraham's list, but Sturm is consistent and willing and dedicated to his craft. And the Germans love him.

Sturm is just 29, so he could reasonably spend the next five years in Germany bumping off one European after another and have a chance to get into the Hall based solely on volume and his popularity there. To make a tired point, Calzaghe and Ricky Hatton could have done the same thing and maybe gotten in. Both chose to take their chances in America. It worked out spectacularly for Calzaghe, maybe a little less so for Hatton, but both improved their chances by taking the risk. Sturm would too.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

The likeability factor should help Ayala

No Chance

Oh, the dread of having no chance. The misery of it all. What a heartache to be placed here. And don't fool yourself—the guys who fall into this bracket know they have no chance for greatness and fight mostly for the money it makes them or the attention it gets them. There's nothing wrong with that so long as they know it and are honest with themselves, and even if they're not, who cares? Fight on anyway, dear no-hopers. We'd be lost without you.

John Ruiz

This may seem like a bit of a no-brainer until you look at the case Ruiz can make for induction: wins over Evander Holyfield, Hasim Rahman, Andrew Golota, Jameel McCline, Fres Oquendo, Kirk Johnson, and two reigns as the WBA's heavyweight titleholder. Not to mention a working relationship with Don King, who was inducted, somewhat distastefully, some years ago. If he's beaten Nikolay Valuev by the time you read this, he will be, at least in the eyes of the truly warped, a "three-time heavyweight champion." Want more? His position as the first Puerto Rican heavyweight beltholder only improves his chances.

Here's why it will never happen: The same way very exciting but under-accomplished guys are often given the benefit of the doubt, so too are accomplished but really boring guys disqualified. There hasn't been a top-rated fighter in the last quarter-century so predictably objectionable to watch as Ruiz, who is so consistently hard on the eyes. It's not just that he's dull; he's worse than dull. People don't forget that. Ever. Plus, in his only fight against a "Sure-Shot" (Roy Jones, a light heavyweight moving up), Ruiz was non-competitive. So forget it. It's over, Johnny.

Hasim Rahman

Like John Ruiz, Rahman will have some supporters making a case for induction based largely, in his case, on his electrifying knockout of Lennox Lewis in 2001 in THE RING's Upset of the Year. It's hard to understate the significance of that win—it was for the *world* heavyweight title. Rahman has also had other good moments against middle-of-the-road heavyweights and impressed enough against that opposition that convince the fight press that he was always ready to take over the division, that he finally had dedicated himself. Or, later on, *re*dedicated himself.

It never happened. And losses to David Tua (tainted as it was), Evander Holyfield, Lewis in the rematch, John Ruiz, and Oleg Maskaev—especially Maskaev—demonstrate that the Hall of Fame-worthy version of Rahman was a mirage. He never existed. And he won't exist in the Hall either.

Jermain Taylor

It started out so well for Taylor, didn't it? A nice HBO contract, a string of impressive knockouts, even if they mostly came against old junior middleweights. He was the next Sugar Ray Leonard, with the nice smile, gentle

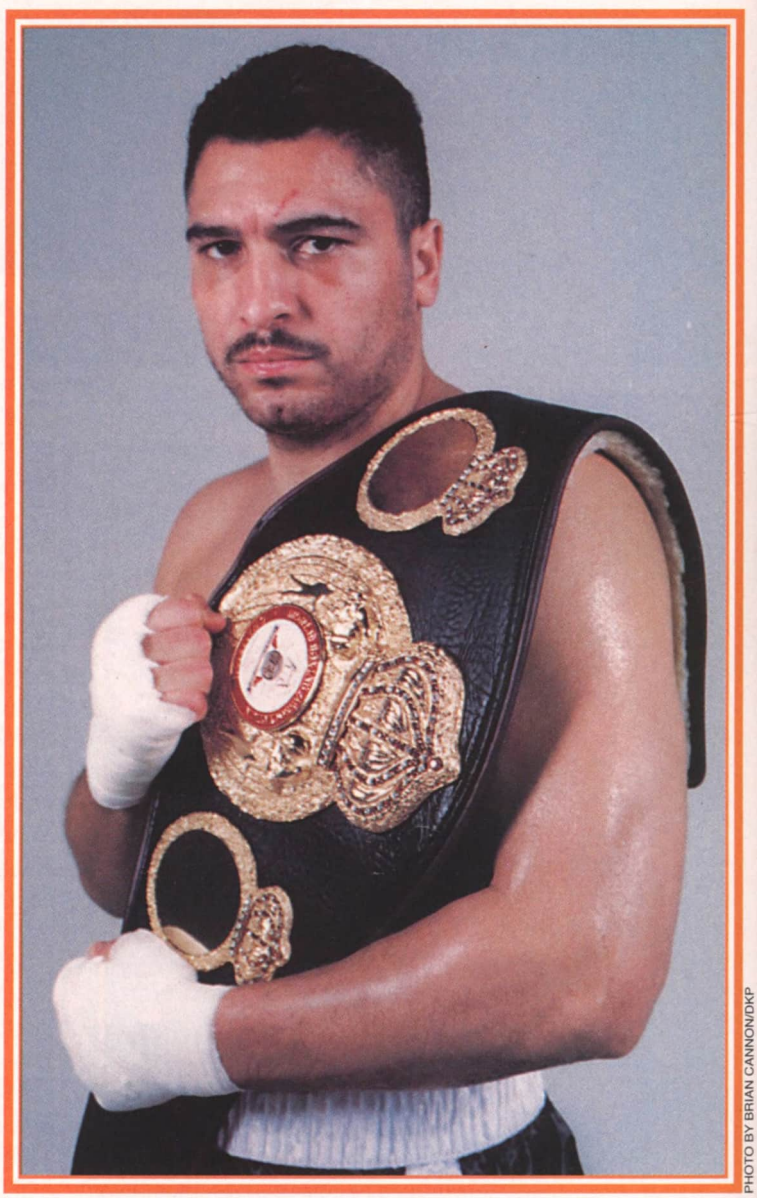


PHOTO BY BRIAN CANNON/DKP

Ruiz' style might be the deciding factor in denying him entrance to the Hall

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Taylor had all the belts, but didn't keep them very long

manners, and killer jab. Even when he squeaked by Bernard Hopkins you could make the case it was to be expected—he was learning, and Hopkins was passing the torch. But it only got worse.

It's not just that Taylor lost successive fights to Kelly Pavlik. There are worse things a fighter can do. It's the draw against Winky Wright. It's the backing up against the under-sized, under-powered Kassim Ouma. It's the split decision win over Cory Spinks. It's the rematch with Hopkins. Taylor should be forever congratulated for taking the tougher fights he took as middleweight champion. But you only get credit if you win them, impressively. And we can't remember the last time Taylor won impressively.

Brian Viloria

The table was pretty much set for Viloria. A Hawaiian flyweight with a good punch, a nice face, and a bit of charisma gets you almost all the way home when it comes to matters like these. He just has to be able to fight well at a good, high level for a long time, and though Viloria started out well, it hasn't panned out like many thought it would.

Don't get us wrong. Viloria can fight, just not well enough to get to the Hall. Omar Nino demonstrated that (once dirty, once clean) and so did Edgar Sosa. We feel pretty strongly that in October, Ulises Solis will show it too.

Paul Malignaggi

Malignaggi's brave performance against Miguel Cotto in 2006 turned some heads. Most of us thought he'd crumble under the kind of attack he stood up to all night. It also might surprise you to learn that we give him at least a decent chance of beating "Sure-Shot" Ricky Hatton when they meet in Las Vegas in November. But even if Malignaggi pulls off a win over one of the most popular fighters on the planet, he's not getting to the Hall. Why? Call it Vitali Klitschko syndrome: too many injuries.

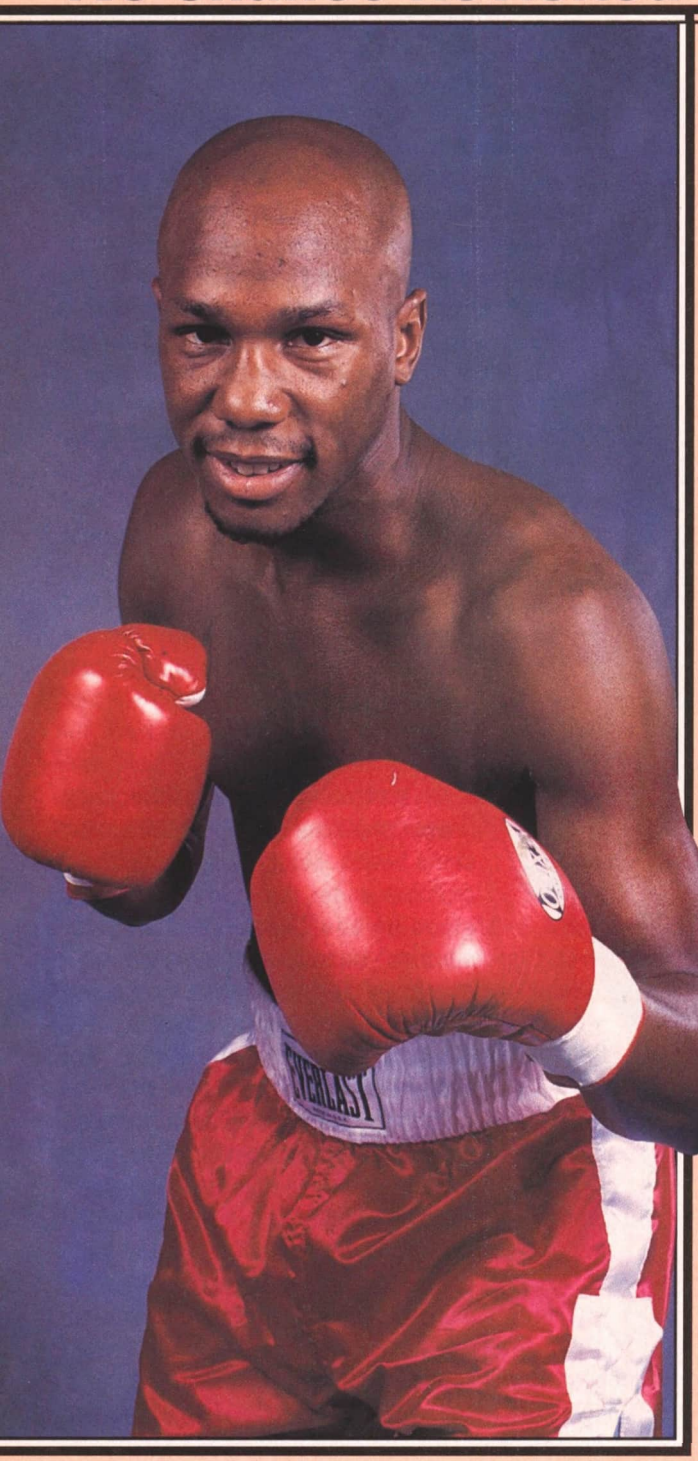
Malignaggi's had his right hand repaired how many times now—seven, eight, 106? You just can't be injured as frequently as he is and expect to last very long, and longevity is key to getting into the Hall. We're not saying if Malignaggi were injury-free he'd be a lock. But as it is, we'll be surprised if he's still fighting two years from now, never mind long enough to get to Canastota.

John Duddy

How badly we all wanted Duddy to succeed. It's not just us. It's everyone in the boxing business. A kid like Duddy, are you kidding? Handsome, articulate, accented, a puncher, and so Irish. The kid can fill up the Garden in 20 minutes by fighting guys that *The Contender* turned down. And you can take him overseas to Ireland, where the economy, if you can imagine, is thriving and people can't wait to pay to see the kid in the ring. He's a goldmine.

There's one problem. The kid can't fight. Not really. And he bleeds. And, as it turns out, he's not that big a puncher either. Did we mention he bleeds? The cat got out of the bag when he went life and death with a shot Yory Boy Campas

No Chance Revisited



Austin had the talent but not the breaks

Naseem Hamed's slide from "Maybe" to "No Chance" may be the most precipitous of any in this analysis. What a shame ... But **Danny Romero**, whom we once called the hardest puncher in the sport, comes close ... There are several immigrants from the "Too Soon to Tell (Probably)" designation that arrive here, heads bowed in mourning. How sad. Each showed real Hall of Fame potential eight years ago or they wouldn't have wound up on that list to begin with. But here they are, and right off the bat it's interesting to note that several had legal or substance abuse issues that ruined their chances. First is **Paul Spadafora**. Once a budding young lightweight titleholder, he is now a 32-year-old welterweight who cannot possibly have the speed and legs that were hallmarks of his youth ... One-time undefeated junior bantamweight beltholder **Eric Morel**, after losing to Martin Castillo in 2005, was convicted of sexual assault of a drunken 15-year-old girl and was sent to prison. He's now fought three times in 2008, but is a 32-year-old bantamweight with too much time lost ... When we put **Tim Austin** in the "Too Soon to Tell (Probably)" category eight years ago, we wanted to place him higher, but couldn't because he wasn't active enough. After getting stopped by Rafael Marquez in 2003, he was indicted on a rape charge he spent the next two years fighting (ultimately he was acquitted). By the time he finally came back, in 2005, it was too late ... **Zab Judah**'s legal problems didn't slow him down, but his emotional immaturity did. Not against Kostya Tszyu, who pancaked him after we said Judah would probably make it to the Hall, but in most of his subsequent losses, especially the one to Carlos Baldomir ... There were lower expectations for those who arrive from the "Too Soon to Tell (Probably Not)" classification, but that doesn't mean it hurts any less. **David Reid** wasn't going anywhere, droopy eyelid or not ... Yes, Lennox Lewis ruined **Michael Grant**, but if it wasn't him it would have been someone else ... For all the amateur success **Vassiliy Jirov** had, he sure didn't mind attacking headfirst in the pros, did he? He might have had a longer and better career if he'd paid just a little attention to defense ... It might have been very different for **Dariusz Michalczewski** if Roy Jones had gone to Germany and fought him. Then again, no it wouldn't ... Nothing changed in the last eight years for **William Joppy**, **Keith Holmes**, **Junior Jones**, **The Brothers Ruelas**, **James Page**,

in 2006. The following year, same thing with Anthony Bonsante. Oh, how we'd like it if Duddy were Hall material. He just isn't. Not now. Not ever.

Anthony Mundine

Mundine may be one the great attractions in Australian boxing history, and, given his lack of amateur experience (just four fights), he's accomplished quite a lot. But he's not getting to the Hall based on wins over Sam Soliman and Danny Green, who represent the *best* of his victims. The balance of his record is littered with such luminaries as Darmel Castillo and Rashid Matumla, Rick Thornberry and Crazy Kim (yes, Crazy Kim).

Whenever Mundine has stepped up, he's lost, usually spectacularly. He may be the only grown man ever to be knocked unconscious by the notoriously feather-fisted Sven Ottke, and Mikkel Kessler decisioned him handily. Even Manny Siaca floored and beat Mundine, who has a far better chance of making it into rugby's hall of fame than he does boxing's. If they have one.

PHOTO BY GREG WOOD/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Too many no-hope opponents hamper Mundine's chances

Sharmba Mitchell, **Michael Moorer**, **Fred Norwood**, **Byron Mitchell**, **Miguel Angel Gonzalez**, or **Michael Nunn**: no chance then, no chance now.

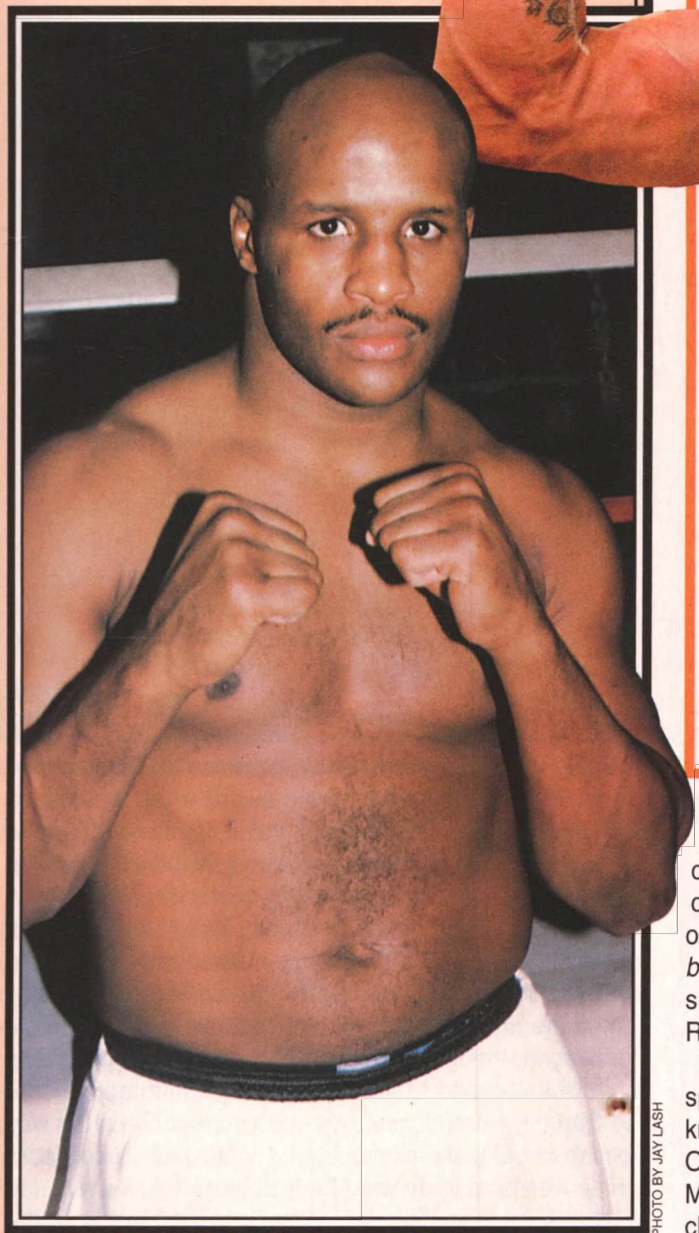


PHOTO BY JAY LASH

Moorer too inconsistent to qualify

Too Soon to Tell

The game is full of fighters who simply haven't been at it long enough to make a case for getting to the Hall. Or who have been at it a long time but have enough left in the tank to make a run for it toward the end. One fight can change everything, but we think these guys have a decent shot down the road.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Pavlik appears to be having a Hall of Fame career

Kelly Pavlik

We don't want to be accused of jumping on the bandwagon here, and besides that, at this writing Pavlik's only defended the world middleweight title once. But a guy doesn't have to reign for five years for you to know he is special. You knew it about Pavlik when he stopped Jose Luis Zertuche, and when he walked down and brutalized Edison Miranda. You knew it when he stopped Jermain Taylor, even if—no, make that especially because—he almost didn't make it out of the second round. In the rematch, Taylor was better, and so was Pavlik. This is a very confident, very strong, very driven young fighter who knows exactly who he is and where he came from. That's a dangerous man to face in the ring, and our bet is that he'll remain dangerous for a long time.

Miguel Cotto

Cotto accomplished too much and went through so many fighters that you can't downgrade him too much for losing to Antonio Margarito. That he was beating Margarito handily through the first six rounds is certainly worth something, as are the 32 guys he whipped convincingly before suffering his first loss. Cotto got enough good work done before Margarito beat him to warrant inclusion here. Unless the loss ruined him, he'll do good work after too. If his next 30 fights are anything like his first 30 (admittedly a big if), we'll probably see him in Canastota.

Nonito Donaire

Being very young and having a presumably long career ahead of you is a double-edged sword when it comes to getting to the Hall. On one hand, you have plenty of time to amass the kinds of numbers and a body of work that can get you there. On the other, you have plenty of time to screw up, to get distracted, lazy, bitter, etc. Which way a kid will go we can only predict by looking at what he's done so far, and how. Donaire, who's only 25, looks like someone who can go the full route. It's not just because he starched Vic Darchinyan, though that is part of it. It's also how. It takes a ton of self-belief to stand in front of a human hammer like Darchinyan and walk him into your counters, the way Donaire did. Donaire comes from a fighting family and looks like he was born to do what he is doing. He has a real ring presence, and we have a hunch we could see him in the Hall one day.

(Probably)

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Donaire blows away Darchinyan in mega-upset

Antonio Margarito

Margarito's biggest problem when it comes to getting in the Hall won't be the loss to Paul Williams or to Daniel Santos or to Rodney Jones or Larry Dixon. It'll be the lack of bigger-name guys on his resume. Margarito has spent a career making it so that other big-name fighters avoid him, and his win over Miguel Cotto is a case in point. Who's going to want to fight him after seeing that? Margarito has to hope that his status as one of the top welterweight contenders is sufficient to draw the other very big names around his weight, namely, Williams, Shane Mosley, maybe a rematch with Cotto. And then, when he is the world champion, they will come to him. It's just a hunch, but we think that by the end of the day, he'll get enough high-level action to get to the Hall.

Cristian Mijares

You don't like to see a boxer-type like Mijares get hit as much as he does, especially if he expects to have a long career. And it doesn't help that he can't punch very hard (less than half of his wins are by knockout). But he is so good at what he does it's hard to imagine he won't keep doing it at a level high enough to make some real inroads to the Hall. The WBC/WBA junior bantamweight titleholder may not even get past rival Fernando Montiel if and when they meet, but when you think of how he looked against Jose Navarro and how profoundly superior he was to Jorge Arce, it's hard to discount his chances. This little guy can fight, and if forced to make a prediction, we like his chances.

Robert Guerrero

It's hard not to like Guerrero. He's earnest, he has the right temperament, and he always shows up in shape. His recent move to 130 pounds comes a little too late to offer the bigger fights, which he'll need to build his case; Manny Pacquiao, Juan Manuel Marquez, and Joan Guzman have all recently jumped to 135. But Guerrero is young enough, at a near embryonic 25, to build good credentials so long as he keeps winning, something he's had little troubling doing so far. Further, he seems to have his head on straight. His wife's illness proved useful in getting his name and story out there, and, above all, the kid can fight. Ask Jason Litzau.

Fernando Montiel

It would have been easy to write off Montiel after his loss to Mark Johnson, and maybe too after his loss to the much bigger but significantly less talented Jhonny Gonzalez. Subsequent victories, like his electrifying stoppage of Martin Castillo earlier this year, demonstrate how wrong it would have been. Montiel's not without weakness; his chin isn't as sturdy as one might like, and he's not as consistently on his game as you want a top fighter to be. But he's busy, exciting, highly skilled, and mostly fearless. His fight against Philippine contender Z Gorres, penciled in for October, should be interesting.

Paul Williams

There are two things that give Williams a leg up in this discussion: his age and his height. He's just 27 years old, a baby in this age of high-achieving fortysomethings, and stands a full 6'1". That height affords him the room to put on a lot of weight and to outgrow several divisions as he ages. At that size, it is not inconceivable that he could someday be seen fighting at light heavyweight or even cruiserweight (as did Thomas Hearns, the last very successful welterweight we saw with Williams' size). How successful he'll be is another question, but, assuming his direction is always up, he'll never be limited by his size (until he gets to heavyweight). That Williams came back to blow out the very competent Carlos Quintana after suffering his first defeat says good things about his state of mind. You can't disqualify him from this discussion. Not yet.

Jorge Linares

Venezuela's undefeated wunderkind is getting all kinds of attention and comparisons to Oscar De La Hoya. That's a lot to live up to, especially when no one can know for sure yet if Linares is even good enough to be in the running some day for the Hall. But the earmarks are there. He has the long amateur background, the adoring fans (mostly in Japan, where he lives), the speed, the power, the skills,

Too Soon to Tell (Probably) Revisited

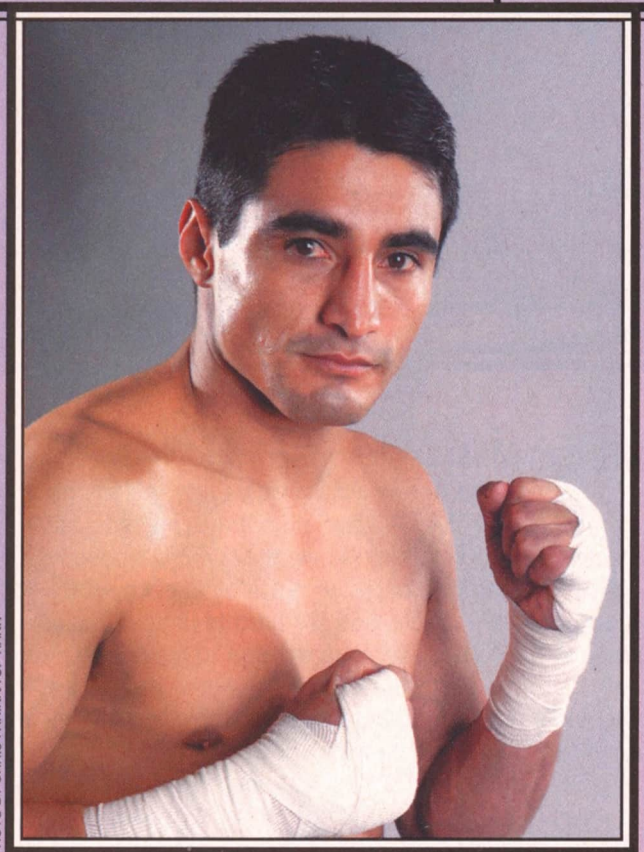


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Morales moves up to "Sure Shot"

A full 40 percent of the fighters we placed in this category eight years ago bettered their chances in the eight years that followed, which is a damned good batting average if you ask us. **Floyd Mayweather** and **Erik Morales** got enough excellent work done to be elevated to "Sure Shots," while **Kostya Tszyu** and **Fernando Vargas** jump to "Probable." You could make a strong case for Tszyu, the long-time kingpin at 140, to go a rung higher with Morales and Mayweather, but the way he lost to Ricky Hatton (another "Sure Shot") left a bad taste in the mouth of some. Still, we wouldn't be at all surprised to see him get in. Vargas will get some resistance because he lost to almost all of the bigger names of his era, but hey, no one disputes that Thomas Hearns will be in, too, once he gets around to retiring. Vargas retired at a very young age and that doesn't really help his case, but he would have damaged it to a far greater degree had he continued to fight. At any rate, only **Mark Johnson** slipped a notch, to "Maybe," and you could argue that as well. His important work was done already when he abruptly left the scene, but again, how you leave this business is as important as how you come into it. The balance of names that fell into this category eight years ago end up in the dreaded "No Chance" designation, because when you start off

and the WBC featherweight title won by starching the respected Oscar Larios. It's disconcerting that a shoulder injury canceled a scheduled defense against Feider Viloria, because most fighters are either injury prone or not. If this is the first in a long line of Linares injuries, then his chances for induction some day are nil. He's still a baby though at 22 years old, so he has a long time to build his case. He has to stay healthy.

Amir Khan

It's been a while since a British fighter received the kind of adulation and praise that Khan is getting. You probably have to go back to Naseem Hamed, but the comparisons aren't entirely relevant. Khan is much more balanced and conventional than was Hamed, whose unorthodox style (and showmanship) was part of his appeal. What Khan does share with Hamed is a certain charisma, along with head-numbing punching power. Chronologically a mere neophyte at just 21, Khan is already among the top 10 lightweights in the world, as his knockout of established Michael Gomez suggests. Unlike other top British fighters, Khan is under no urgent obligation to fight in the United States, partly because Great Britain is treating him very nicely, thank you very much, and partly because he's so young. Barring some disaster—like some public undressing followed by a quick retirement—Khan looks forward to many years of building his case for induction.

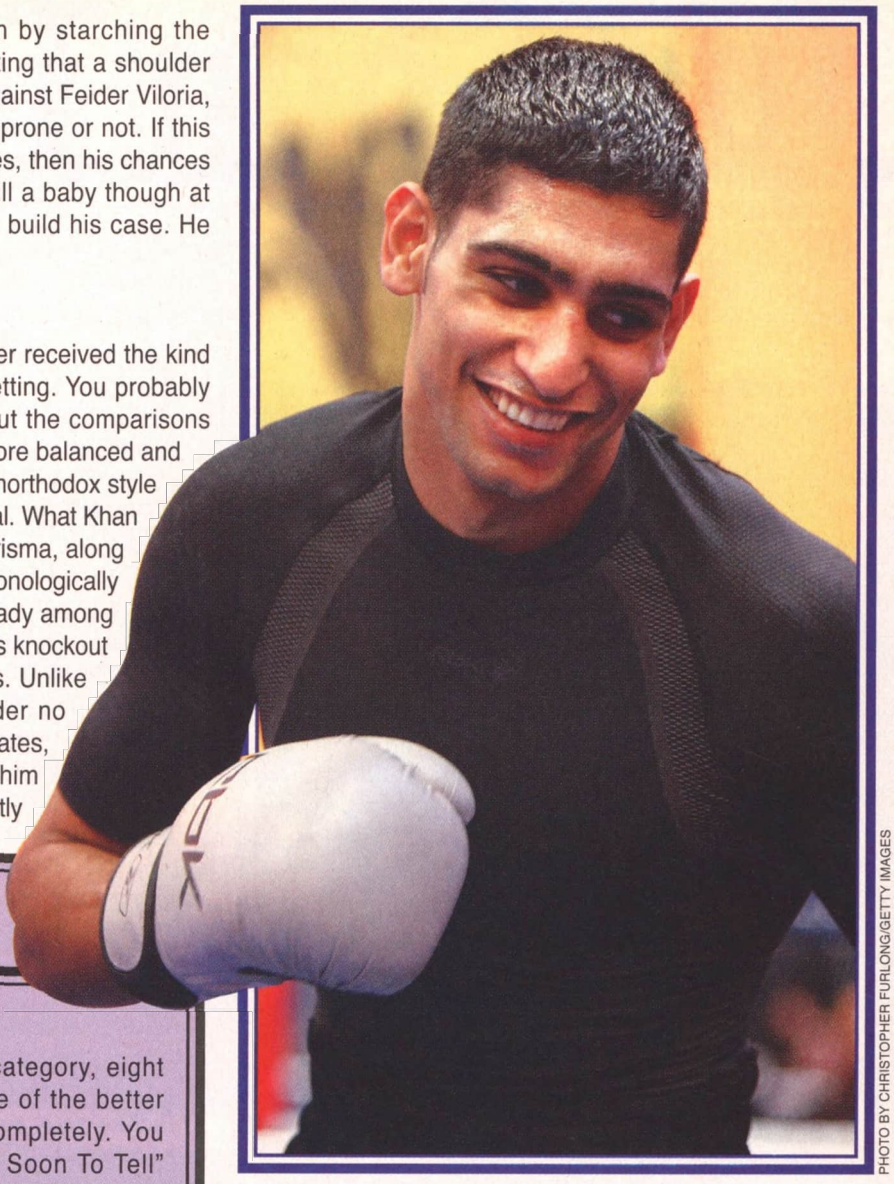


PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/GETTY IMAGES

Khan is on the right track, but still has a long way to go

Juan Diaz

Diaz' inclusion here surprises us more than anyone. When he came up, Rocky Juarez was considered the much better prospect, but it's been Diaz, and not Juarez, who has flourished. For the purposes of this discussion, Diaz' loss to Nate Campbell is almost irrelevant. "The Baby Bull" got a lot accomplished at 135 and he's still just 24 years old. While it's true that his pressuring, high-volume style is not normally associated with long careers, even if he retired by 28 that gives him another four years to get business done. By the time you read this he will have either beaten or lost to Michael Katsidis (we predict the former) and after that there are other bigger-money fights to make at that weight, e.g., against David Diaz, maybe Manny Pacquiao, Amir Khan, et al. For one so young, Diaz is pretty far along.

in the "Too Soon to Tell (Probably)" category, eight years later you either move up to one of the better spots or you fall out of the running completely. You don't stay here—it can't still be "Too Soon To Tell" eight years later. So it's in that unfortunate "No Chance" sidebar that you'll find updates on **Paul Spadafora**, **Zab Judah**, **Eric Morel**, and **Tim Austin**. The interesting and sad thing about each of them is they all had real potential and a better than average shot at making it to the Hall. They just couldn't put it all together.

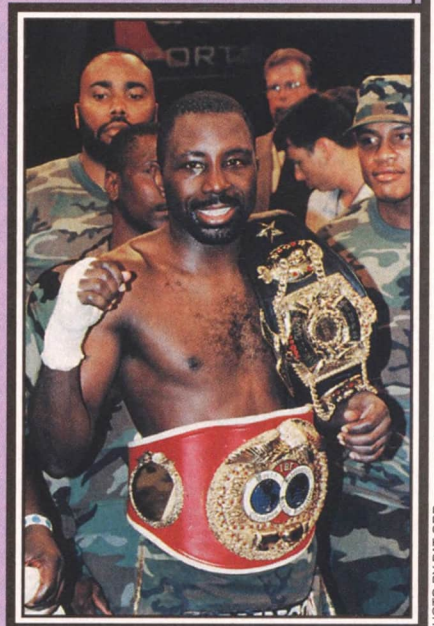


PHOTO BY PAT ORR

Johnson slips a bit to "Maybe"

Too Soon To Tell

It's a matter of mathematical certainty that more guys won't make it to the Hall than will. And it has to be that way. Some will have the potential to, maybe the connections or the story or the left hook, but it just won't come together the way it has to for them to get there. It's too early to know for sure with these guys, but we think they'll fall short.

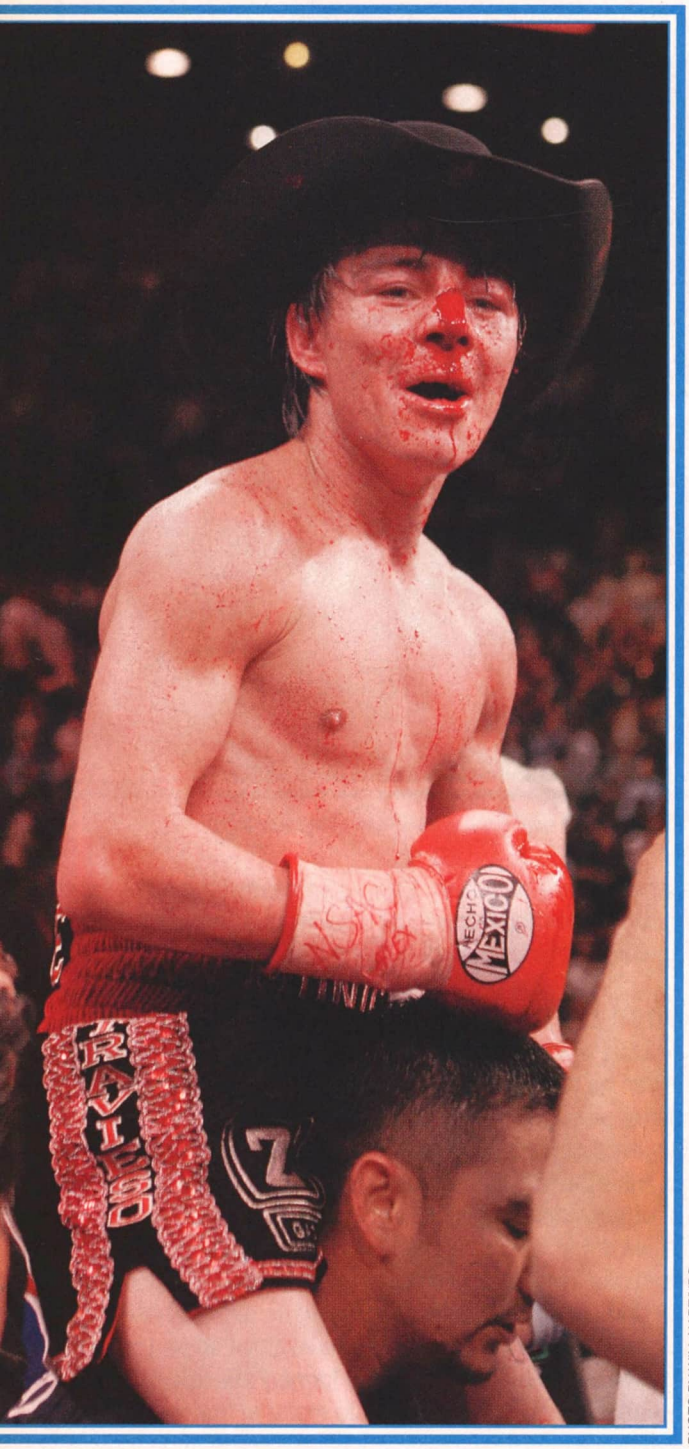


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Sorry, Jorge, blood and guts won't be enough

Jorge Arce

My, Arce is fun, isn't he? And not only when he's knocking the stuffing out of his opponent's head. Even when Christian Mijares was boxing the bejesus out of him, Arce managed to make it look a little fun, like it's not altogether such a bad thing getting your face split wide open like an over ripe tomato. He wasn't out-and-out grinning, like he was while blowing out Rosendo Alvarez, but Arce, more than anything, gives the impression that he is the life of the party whether or not there is, in fact, a party going on. Sure, he's a good puncher against the right guy, and we'd give almost anything to see him trade bombs with Vic Darchinyan. He's beaten some good fighters and lost to others, but eventually he's going to fall out of love with being the life of the party. You wake up too many days with a headache and that's no way to get to Canastota. For bigger guys maybe. Not when you're 115 pounds.

Sam Peter

When Peter was first coming up, you could feel the collective desire of the fight community trying to will him into being the next Mike Tyson. By the time Wladimir Klitschko won every second against him, except for the 24 he spent on the mat or taking mandatory eight-counts, the smart heads had decided Tyson was too high a standard, that maybe the new Ike Ibeabuchi was closer. Alas, that, too, is a big stretch. Peter is a good, strong heavyweight puncher and the only real threat to Klitschko. He showed a lot of improvement in legitimately outpointing James Toney in their rematch, and a lot of heart getting off the floor three times to outhustle Jameel McCline. He should beat Vitali Klitschko in October, but big deal. What all that will probably add up to for Peter is a lifetime of summers unhurried and peaceful. No traffic to slog through, no crowds to tolerate, no acceptance speeches in Canastota.

Nate Campbell

It does seem silly, we agree, that for a fighter who is already 36 years old, it is deemed to be "Too Soon To Tell" if he will make it to the Hall of Fame. Cripes, shouldn't we know by now? Yes, but Campbell is so interestingly inconsistent, and a late bloomer on top of that, it's hard to tell. His age alone should disqualify him, but after what he did to Juan Diaz, how can you? On the other hand, there are

(Probably Not)

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Mora was more aggressive than usual stopping Rito Ruvalcaba

those two embarrassing kayo losses to Robbie Peden, and the losses also to Francisco Lorenzo and Isaac Hlatswayo. The loss to Joel Casamayor is no crime. Look, Campbell would have to do a whole lot between now and the time his body wears out to be a good shot to land in the Hall. We think it's improbable, but the guy is a real fighter who knows what he's doing in the ring. We don't think it will happen, but with Campbell you just never know.

Sergio Mora

You've got to hand it to Mora. When they all said Peter Manfredo was going to win the inaugural season of *The Contender*, Mora beat him to the top and took home the big prize. When everyone laughed at him for not facing Jermain Taylor when he had the chance, Mora, well, didn't do anything. But when they all said there was no way a TV show fighter could beat Vernon Forrest, Mora went out there and did it. Good for him. That takes balls. The contractually mandated rematch will have taken place by the time you read this, and even if Mora wins it, we still see him having a hard time getting to the Hall. He does have the advantage of lowered expectations: No one expected him to get this far. But it's hard to envision him really competing with the best fighters at 154 and 160 over an extended period of time, which is what you have to do to gain entrance. There—now that we've said that, he can start writing his acceptance speech.

Edwin Valero

There are few better angles in boxing than those that involve long kayo streaks. Valero is a natural born puncher who's stopped all 24 fighters he's faced, 19 in the first

round. That kind of streak will get you a lot of attention, but it doesn't by itself mark you as a truly special fighter (see Lamar Clark). Valero may be more than just a good puncher, and we'd love as much as anyone to see him in a shootout with Manny Pacquiao. We're just not as convinced of his value as are many others. Then there's the brain injury issue. An old head injury sustained in a motorcycle crash has kept Valero from fighting in the United States for the last five years. Recent rumors indicate that suspension may be ending soon, and Valero may indeed be at no greater risk than any other fighter of suffering a brain bleed. But what if he does? Valero may get to 100 knockouts by the time he's ready for the Hall, and that would surely get him in. We just don't think it's likely.

Chad Dawson

There are a couple of ways to look at Chad Dawson's decision win over Glen Johnson last April. Either he passed a good, hard test presented by a worthy, experienced veteran and came out of it a better fighter, or he was lucky to get a decision against a 39-year-old guy with 11 losses on his record. And when someone was hurt, it was he, not Johnson. Dawson passed each previous test on his way to a big fight with Antonio Tarver in October. He beat Eric Harding (albeit a version well past his prime), Tomasz Adamek, and even blew out the same Epifiano Mendoza that gave Jeff Lacy all kinds of hell recently. There's very little to dislike about the kid (and we mean kid; he's only 26 years old). He's fast, well conditioned, a southpaw, and a very good bodypuncher. So what's not to like? Nothing. He's fine. It just takes a little more than "fine" to make it to the Hall.

Vic Darchinyan

The fight game's purest puncher will inspire fear in the hearts of his opponents for as long as he's lacing on gloves, but he'll also inspire something else too: hope. Every fighter with a steady hand and calm demeanor will know that if he stands his ground and looks for openings, Darchinyan will supply them, in abundance. Nonito Donaire demonstrated

Too Soon to Tell (Probably Not) Revisited

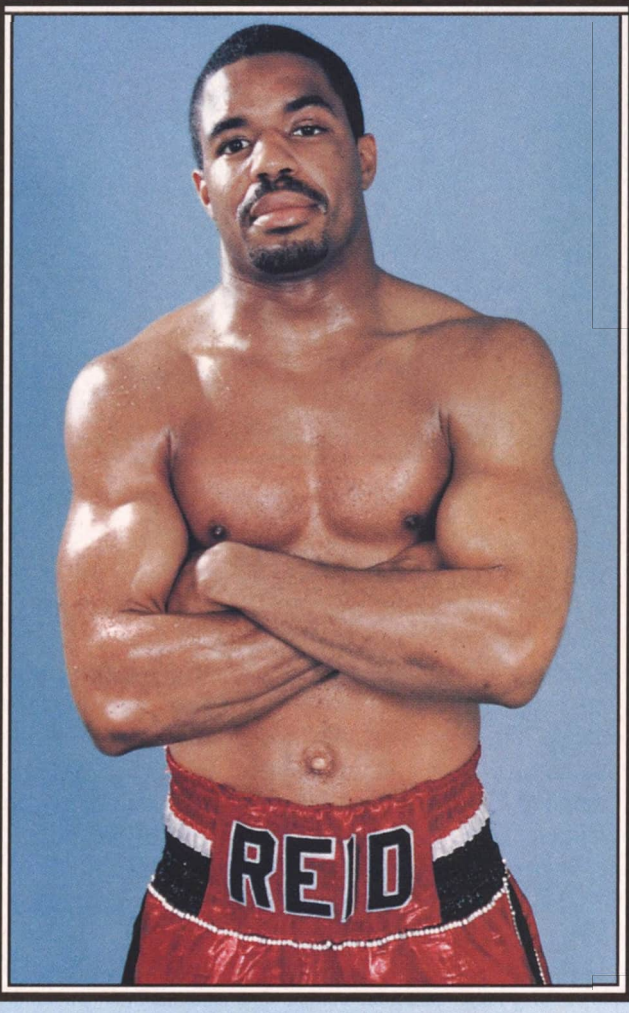


PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Reid's eye problem curtailed his career

Of the eight fighters to land in this category in 2000, one proved us embarrassingly and glaringly wrong by leapfrogging all the way up to "Sure Shot." That was **Marco Antonio Barrera**, who at that time hadn't yet beaten Naseem Hamed to reinvigorate his career, and had just begun (with a disputed loss) his historic three-fight series with fellow sure-shot Erik Morales. That series and Barrera's

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Grant tries to beat the count

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Darchinyan will need more than his punch

long reign as WBC super featherweight titleholder (and a shorter one as world featherweight champion) propelled him right to the top ... **Antonio Tarver**'s promotion was much less dramatic. It took him eight years to graduate from "Too Soon To Tell (Probably Not)" to "Maybe." Promotions don't come much less significant than that. You would have thought his two wins over Roy Jones (a "Sure Shot") would have given him more of a boost, but there were enough downturns during the period to retard his progress ... **Diego Corrales** made the same jump as Tarver on the strength of his monumental first fight with Jose Luis Castillo and, unfortunately, his death (Halls of Fame love to induct those who die too young) ... Completing the "Too Soon to Tell (Probably Not)" to "Maybe" trifecta is **Rosendo Alvarez**, who couldn't get past the great Ricardo Lopez, but certainly helped him along to retirement ... Of the remaining four fighters from that group, two crashed and burned and two retired: **David Reid** and **Michael Grant** in the former category, **Vassiliy Jirov** and **Dariusz Michalczewski** in the latter. All get demoted from this category to the dreaded "No Chance."

that quite amply in his stunning kayo of Darchinyan last year. That Darchinyan has won two out of three since, including a smashing knockout of the highly regarded Dimitri Kirilov, shows just as clearly that what Donaire has done won't be easily duplicated by other junior bantamweights. But it will be by some, the better ones.

Steve Luevano

Luevano's fast hands and classic skills render him a darling of the purists, who prize those who can win with brains rather than brawn. And Luevano certainly can do that. There's no shame in losing to Martin Honorio or, necessarily, drawing with Mario Santiago as Luevano did last time out. Luevano clearly knows what he's doing in the ring, but will have to go after and win bigger fights against better opponents than Honorio and Santiago and Terdsak Jandaeng if he's going to make a run for the Hall. Fights with fellow top featherweights Chris John and Jorge Solis wouldn't hurt, and at a relatively young 27, Luevano has time. But, as tough as he is, Luevano conveys a sort of fragility in the ring that we suspect will ultimately hold him back. ■

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Feb. 1985: Gerry Cooney: How Far Can He Go This Time? Color Pinup: Michael Spinks. Interview: Ray Mancini. Also: Dream fights, Hector Camacho.

May 1985: Thomas Hearns: *KO* Fighter Of The Year. Color Pinup: Gerry Cooney. Also: Camacho-Ramirez, Truth Williams, Year In Review.

July 1985: Aaron Pryor: Has Hawk Time Run Out? Color Pinup: Donald Curry. Interview: Greg Page. Also: Ray Mancini, James Shuler, Costello-Hatcher.

Aug. 1985: King Cobra: "Hagler-Hearns Is Done And I'm Better Than Both Of Them!" Color Pinup: John Mugabi. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Larry Holmes, Roberto Duran, DeWitt-Lee.

Oct. 1985: Still Champ After All These Years: Larry Holmes—A Legend Continues To Grow. Interview: Mark Breland. Also: Michael Spinks, Milton McCrory, Wilfredo Gomez.

Nov. 1985: McGuigan! The Pluck Of The Irish. Also: Julio Cesar Chavez, Thomas-Weaver, Donald Curry, featherweights.

Dec. 1985: Pinklon Thomas: "Larry Holmes Betrayed Boxing." Color Pinup: Hagler-Mugabi. Also: Mike McCallum, Tyrell Biggs, Camacho-Ramirez.

Feb. 1986: King Michael: How Long Will He Rule The Heavyweights? Also: Barry McGuigan, Shawn O'Sullivan, Spinks-Holmes, *Rocky IV*, world's best fighter poll.

Oct. 1986: They're Back!!! The Cooney Circus Returns. Interview: Sugar Ray Leonard. Also: Jimmy Paul, Mike Tyson, Donald Curry.

Dec. 1986: Larry Holmes' Message To Mike Tyson: "Show Me You Can Kick My Butt!" Color pinup: Mark Breland. Interview: Holmes. Also: Witherspoon-Bruno, Evander Holyfield, Cruz-McGuigan, Danny Lopez.

Feb. 1987: Upset Of The Decade: Has Honeyghan Cut Short The Curry Era? Color Pinup: Marvin Johnson. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Edwin Rosario, Hector Camacho.

June 1987: New WBA Welterweight Champion Mark Breland: He's Got A Lot To Smile About. Interview: Marvin Hagler. Color Pinup: Greg Haugen. Also: Michael Olajide, Carlos Monzon.

Nov. 1987: Michael Spinks: The War With Tyson Is Okay With Him. Color Pinup: Vinny Pazienza. Interview: Frankie Duarte. Also: Matthew Hilton, Hagler-Czyz.

Dec. 1987: Mike Tyson: Undisputed Heavyweight King—But Is He Losing His Loyal Subjects? Color Pinup: Matthew Hilton. Interview: Barry McGuigan. Also: Aaron Pryor, Mike McCallum.

Jan. 1988: The Collapse Of A Hero: Why Breland Never Hit The Mark Of Greatness. Color Pinup: Michael Spinks. Interview: Aaron Pryor. Also: Michael Nunn, Alexis Arguello, lightweights.

Feb. 1988: Pazienza & Haugen Go For Each Other's Throats. Color Pinup: Marlon Starling. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Tate-Olajide, ESPN Boxing.

July 1988: Superfight History Dictates: Don't Expect The Expected From Tyson-Spinks. Color Pinup: Roger Mayweather. Interview: Dr. Ferdie Pacheco. Also: Roberto Duran, Azumah Nelson, Barkley-Olajide.

Aug. 1988: Tyson-Spinks: *KO's* Fearless Forecast Of Superfight '88. Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Matthew Hilton. Also: Lockridge-Knight, Evander Holyfield, Lloyd Honeyghan.

Sept. 1988: Tyson-Spinks, The Aftermath—What If Tyson Wins; What If Spinks Wins? Color Pinup: Frank Tate. Interview: Marlon Starling. Also: Barry McGuigan, Simon Brown, risk-taking.

Oct. 1988: Middleweight Terrorism: Iran Bombs The Hit Man. Color Pinup: Don Lalonde. Interview: Frank Bruno. Also: Roger Mayweather, Marvin Hagler.

Dec. 1988: Sugar Ray's Comeback: Why? Color Pinup: Simon Brown. Interview: Kevin Rooney. Also: Michael Nunn, best fighter poll, welterweight wars.

Jan. 1989: The Troubled Times Of Mike Tyson. Color Pinup: Lloyd Honeyghan. Interview: Gil Clancy. Also: Meldrick Taylor, Jeff Fenech, Boxing's Champs.

Sept. 1989: "I Beat Up Tyson Before, I'll Do It Again," by Carl Williams. Color Pinup: Michael Nunn. Also: Chavez-Mayweather, Brian Mitchell, Marv Albert.

Feb. 1990: George Foreman Risks A Multimillion-Dollar Shot At Tyson. Color Pinup: Brian Mitchell. Interview: Riddick Bowe. Also: Simon Brown, Molina-Lopez, East vs. West.

June 1990: A Sugar-Free Future? Thomas Hearns Is Looking Up. Color Pinup: Glenn McCrory. Interview: Michael Moorer. Also: Matthew Hilton, Molina-Suarez, Foreman-Cooney, Camacho-Paz.

July 1990: *KO* Interview—Sugar Ray Leonard. Color Pinup: Jorge Paez. Also: Michael Nunn, Buster Douglas, Jibaro Perez, the Olympians.

Aug. 1990: Meldrick Taylor: Brilliance In Defeat. Color Pinup: Buster Douglas. Interview: Teddy Atlas. Also: Buddy McGirt, Dokes-Ruddock, Simon Brown.

Sept. 1990: *KO* Interview—Buster Douglas. Color Pinup: Macho Camacho. Also: Thomas Hearns, Nigel Benn, Greg Haugen, Boxing Hall of Fame.

Oct. 1990: Send In The Clown: Is Jorge Paez A Phenom Or A Fraud? Color Pinup: Paul Banke. Interview: Tony Lopez. Also: Chavez-Taylor II, Jesse Benavides.

Nov. 1990: The Comeback Of Mike Tyson: A Crooked Course Straight To The Top. Color Pinup: Tony Lopez. Interview: Don Dunphy. Also: Davis-Breland, Riddick Bowe, federal commission.

Dec. 1990: The Heart Of The Matter: Who Will Survive The Holyfield-Douglas War? Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Virgil Hill. Also: Michael Carbajal, Ruelas Brothers, best fighter poll.

Jan. 1991: Macho Ado About Nothing? Why Hector Camacho Wants To Be Believed. Color Pinup: Meldrick Taylor. Interview: Irving Rudd. Also: Sugar Ray Leonard, Orlando Canizales, Vinny Pazienza.

Feb. 1991: 10 Fighters To Fear: Boxing's Most Destructive Hitters. Color Pinup: Razor Ruddock. Interview: Ray Mercer. Also: Roberto Duran, Saoul Mamby, Mills Lane, Sugar Ray Robinson.

May 1991: Ruddock Eyes The Big Upset Of Tyson. Color Pinup: Luisito Espinosa. Interview: Jeff Fenech. Also: Virgil Hill, Pernell Whitaker, Alex Ramos, Simon Brown, Buddy McGirt.

June 1991: Exclusive *KO* Interview: Evander Holyfield. Color Pinup: Raul Perez. Also: Norris-Leonard, Charles Williams, champs of 1971 vs. 1991, J.C. Chavez.

July 1991: Riddick Bowe: Is He Destined To Be Heavyweight Champ? Color Pinup: Michael Carbajal. Interview: Buddy McGirt. Also: Bobby Czyz, Buster Douglas, Mark Breland.

Aug. 1991: Desert Storm II: Will The Tyson-Ruddock Rematch Be Different? Color Pinup: Loreto Garza. Interview: Michael Carbajal. Also: Brown-Blocker, Fenech-Nelson preview, Harold Brazier, Yuh-Carbajal.

Sept. 1991: Remember Me? I Won The Fight! What "The Real Deal" Still Has To Deal With. Color Pinup: Ray Mercer. Interview: Eddie Futch. Also: Larry Holmes, southpaw heavyweights, Toney-Nunn, Brown-Taylor.

Oct. 1991: Thomas Hearns Works Another Miracle! Now There Are More Hills Left To Climb. Color Pinup: Humberto Gonzalez. Interview: Mike McCallum. Also: Norris-Curry, Richard Steele, Troy Dorsey.

Dec. 1991: Tyson vs. Holyfield—The Experts Analyze The Elements That Will Decide The Fight. Color Pinup: Joey Gamache. Also: Michael Moorer, Pernell Whitaker, Greg Richardson, Robert Quiroga.

Jan. 1992: The Tyson-Holyfield Showdown: An Exclusive Forecast By George Foreman. Color Pinup: Myung Woo Yuh. Also: Fenech-Nelson, TV announcers, boxing's toughest men, Toney-McCallum.

March 1992: *KO* Interview Mike Tyson: An In-Depth, Toe-To-Toe Talk With Boxing's Biggest Star. Color Pinup: Michael Moorer. Also: Thomas Hearns, Tracy Patterson, Larry Holmes, best fighter poll.

May 1992: Division-By-Division Faceoffs: The Best Of '92 vs. The Best Of '67. Color Pinup: James Warring. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Tommy Morrison, Bert Cooper, Gianfranco Rosi.

June 1992: If Not Tyson Or Holyfield, Then Who? Bowe? Moorer? Ruddock? Lewis? Mercer? Color Pinup: James Toney. Interview: Shelly Finkel. Also: Scotty Olson, overrated and underrated fighters, Orlin Norris, Whitaker-Pineda.

July 1992: The Title Reign of Evander Holyfield: A Reason To Hide ... Or A Reason For Pride? Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Julian Jackson. Also: Kelley-Dorsey, Nelson-Fenech, Kennedy McKinney.

Aug. 1992: Bowe Knows The Big Fight: The Top Contender Analyzes Holmes-Holyfield. Color Pinup: Julian Jackson. Interview: Michael Spinks. Also: Thomas Hearns, Blue Horizon, fighting fear, Toney-Barkley, Greg Haugen.

Sept. 1992: Can Tommy Morrison Punch Out The Theory ... White Men Can't Fight. Color Pinup: Welcome Ncita. Interview: Ken Norton. Also: Reggie Johnson, Jimmy Paul, McGirt-Blocker, Ali-Shavers.

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March 1993: Not Just Another English Muffin: Lennox Lewis Powers His Way Toward The Title. Color Pinup: Leeonzer Barber. Interview: Emanuel Steward. Also: Reggie Johnson, Lopez-Gamache, USA Network.

May 1993: Recapping The Future: Julio Cesar Chavez' Road To 100-0. Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Junior Jones. Also: Buddy McGirt, Riddick Bowe, Raul Marquez.

Dec. 1993: The *KO* Feud Rages On: "I Will Torture You!" Says Riddick Bowe To Lennox Lewis. Color Pinup: Kennedy McKinney. Also: Mississippi boxing, George Foreman, Yori Boy Campas , Carbajal-Kim, Morrison-Moorer.

June 1995: The Tug-Of-War Over Mike Tyson. Color Pinup: Wilfredo Vasquez. Interview: Oliver McCall. Also: Alejandro Gonzalez, Alexis Arguello, Kostya Tszyu.

Sept. 1996: Tyson vs. Seldon. Don't Bet On This Fight Until You've Read This Story! Color Pinup: Arturo Gatti. Interview: Butterbean. Also: Dana Rosenblatt, '92 Olympians, McGuigan-Pedroza.

Nov. 1996 (Special 88-Page Edition): The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Roy Jones, Roberto Duran, Joe Cortez.

Dec. 1996: Andrew Golota—Taking The Low Road to Stardom. Color Pinup: Mark Johnson. Interview: Rock Newman. Also: De La Hoya-Gonzalez, Chuck Bodak, bizarre endings, Chavez-Rosario.

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Feb. 1997: *KO's* 1997 Wish List. Color Pinup: Ike Quartey. Interview: Naseem Hamed. Also: David Tua, Felix Trinidad, Adolpho Washington, Bobby Czyz.

Aug. 1997: Oscar Reaches ... But Can't Grasp The Stars. Color Pinup: Nate Miller. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Norris-Trinidad preview, Hall of Fame, Angel Manfredy.

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Holiday 1997 (Special 88-Page Edition): Holyfield-Moorer II: Can Evander Avenge His Ugliest Defeat? Color Pinup: Vince Phillips. Interview: Mills Lane. Also: Roy Jones, Baby Jake Matlala, Boxing 2000.

Jan. 1998: De La Hoya Humbles The Macho Man: "Oscar's The Best I've Ever Fought." Color Pinup: William Guthrie. Interview: Mark Johnson. Also: Johnny Tapia, Pinklon Thomas, defense.

March 1998: Evander Holyfield: For The Real Deal, Lewis Is No Big Deal. Color Pinup: Lou Del Valle. Interview: Lennox Lewis. Also: David Izon, Meldrick Taylor, rapid weight loss.

May 1998: Living Up To The Hype: Sometimes They Do ... Sometimes They Don't. Color Pinup: David Reid. Interview: Best Of ... (Part III). Also: Naseem Hamed, Marty Denkin, women's boxing.

June 1998: Lewis vs. Holyfield: Why The Fight Of The Year Isn't Going To Happen. Color Pinup: Evander Holyfield. Interview: Eddie Futch. Also: Hector Lizarraga, pain, Head-To-Head review.

Aug. 1998: Lewis Bombs Out Briggs: Would The WBC Champ Do This To Holyfield? Color Pinup: Keith Mullings. Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Pernell Whitaker, Marco Antonio Barrera, Roberto Garcia.

Sept. 1998: Can Mike Tyson Make A Successful Comeback? Sugar Ray Leonard Has The Answer. Color Pinup: Michael Grant. Interview: Brad Jacobs. Also: Naseem Hamed, Wayne McCullough, Kirk Johnson.

Oct. 1998: The Ultimate Fantasy Card. Color Pinup: Oscar De La Hoya. Interview: Roy Jones. Also: Brendan Ingle, NYPD boxing, prospect blueprint.

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Nov. 1999: De La Hoya vs. Trinidad: "It's Gonna Come Down To Who The Hell Wants It Most!" Color Pinup: David Reid. Interview: Arturo Gatti. Also: Roy Jones, Sugar Shane Mosley, Vassily Jirov.

Dec. 1999: David Reid & Fernando Vargas: Olympic Teammates On A Collision Course! Color Pinup: Zab Judah. Interview: Ike Ibeabuchi. Also: Vitali Klitschko, Antonio Tarver, Mike Tyson.

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Jan. 2000: Fool's Gold? Trinidad May Have Tarnished Oscar's Image Forever! Color Pinup: Paulie Ayala. Interview: Tony Ayala Jr. Also: David Reid, Johnny Nelson.

Feb. 2000: Breakout 2000: Who's Going To Lead The Way In Y2K? Color Pinup: Roy Jones. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Shane Mosley, Wise-Chavez, Iran Barkley.

March 2000: Mike Tyson: "I'm Tired Of This Crap!" So Are We, Mike! Color Pinup: Vernon Forrest. Interview: James Page. Also: Erik Morales & Naseem Hamed, Diego Corrales, women's boxing.

May 2000: Michael Grant vs. Lennox Lewis—25 Insiders Pick The Winner. Color Pinup: Paul Spadafora. Interview: Dan Goossen. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Johnny Tapia, southpaws.

June 2000: Lewis vs. Grant: Who Will Win ... And Why. Color Pinup: Vitali Klitschko. Interview: Sharmba Mitchell. Also: Shane Mosley, David Izon, 2000 Hall of Fame.

July 2000: Today's Fighters, Tomorrow's Hall Of Famers. Color Pinup: Keith Holmes. Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Zab Judah, Morales-Barrera, Wayne Braithwaite.

Aug. 2000: Mosley Prepares For Oscar: "It Will Be Like The First Round Of Hagler-Hearns." Color Pinup: Steve Johnston. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Vargas-Quartey, Thomas Hearns, Felix Trinidad, common sense vs. cowardice.

Sept. 2000: Now Vargas Is Ready For Trinidad & De La Hoya. Color Pinup: Erik Morales. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Trinidad vs. all-time greats, Thomas Hearns, common sense vs. cowardice.

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Feb. 2001: Fernando Vargas' Internal Battle: If He Can't Win It, He Can't Beat Trinidad. Interview: Evander Holyfield. Also: Derrick Gainer, Roy Jones, Naseem Hamed.

April 2001: Lewis Is Too Much For Tua ... But Could Tyson Do Any Better? Interview: Max Kellerman. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Wladimir Klitschko.

June 2001: Trinidad-Jones: Superfight Or Mismatch? Interview: Virgil Hill. Also: Mayweather-Corrales, Paul Ingle, Davey Hilton, Tyson's relationship with Vargas, Judah, and Mayweather.

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Feb. 2002: Bernard Hopkins: "I Am The American Dream. I Am The American Story." Interview: Wladimir Klitschko. Also: Omar Sheika, Vernon Forrest, Juan Lazcano.

April 2002: After Hitting Rock Bottom ... Lennox Is Back On The Path To Greatness. Interview: Duva Boxing. Also: Zab Judah, Mike Tyson, Thomas Tate.

June 2002: Tyson vs. Lewis: 10-Page Preview & Analysis. Interview: Jameel McCline. Also: *Ali* movie, Dorin vs. Balbi & Ward vs. Leija.

Aug. 2002: Still Crazy After All These Years: Should Mike Tyson Be Allowed To Fight? Interview: Kostya Tszyu. Also: Barrera-Morales II preview, Ayala-Adams, Ricky Hatton.

Dec. 2002: Wladimir Klitschko: Would He Be Too Much For Lennox? Interview: Joe Calzaghe. Also: Barrera-Morales II, Evander Holyfield, Freddie Roach.

Winter 2002: A Realistic Look At Tyson's Comeback: He Can't Make History, But He Can Make Millions. Interview: Micky Ward. Also: Antonio Tarver, Antwun Echols, Acelino Freitas.

March 2003: Oscar De La Hoya—The War That Rages Within. Interview: Klitschko brothers. Also: Kassim Ouma, Eric Morel, holiday gifts.

May 2003: Danger Zone! Will Roy Jones Be Doomed By His Heavyweight Ego? Interview: Buddy McGirt. Also: Gatti-Ward II, Floyd Mayweather, Erik Morales.

July 2003: Boxing's Biggest X-Factor: Can Hopkins Recover From His Self-Inflicted Wounds? Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Kostya Tszyu, DaVarryl Williamson, 10 best defensive fighters.

Sept. 2003: Sugar Roy? How Jones Rates With The All-Time Greats. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Corrie Sanders, Jean-Marc Mormeck, Kermit Cintron.

Nov. 2003: De La Hoya-Mosley II: Will Three Years And Seven Pounds Make A Difference? Interview: James Toney. Also: Michael Watson, Erik Morales, Jones-Holyfield head-to-head.

Winter 2003: *KO* Interview Arturo Gatti: "Kostya Tszyu Needs Me More Than I Need Him." Also: Mayorga-Forrest II, Zab Judah, Corrales-Casamayor preview, Joe Calzaghe.

Feb. 2004: Shane Mosley: A Second Chance At Superstardom. Interview: Bernard Hopkins. Also: Laila Ali, Scott LeDoux, retirement.

April 2004: Human After All: Tarver Makes Jones Turn To Tyson. Interview: Emanuel Steward. Also: Sharmba Mitchell, Toney-McCline preview, trash-talking.

June 2004: What Could Tyson Do To Jones? Interview: Antonio Tarver. Also: Bernard Hopkins, Spinks-Mayorga.

Oct. 2004: Dr. Klitschko: The Perfect Band-Aid For The Heavyweight Division. Interview: Diego Corrales. Also: Monte Barrett, Cory Spinks, Vinny Paz & Sven Ottke.

Feb. 2005: Exclusive KO Interview—Manny Pacquiao. Also: Kostya Tszyu, Manning Galloway, quitting, perfect heavyweight.

Oct. 2005: El Feroz With A Twist: Retooled Vargas Gets Defensive. Interview: Zab Judah. Also: Marco Antonio Barrera, Jean-Marc Mormeck, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., *KO* at 25.

Feb. 2006: Can Hip Hop Revitalize Boxing? Interview: Erik Morales. Also: Zab Judah, Ricardo Mayorga, Arturo Gatti, Luis Collazo, Roman Karmazin.

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The Biggest Heavyweight Fight That Will Never Happen

By Eric Raskin

The first recorded fight in human history was between two brothers. You won't find Cain or Abel's records on BoxRec.com, but Cain won by a knockout (and then some), and it's a fight the world is still talking about today, several thousand years later.

Sadly, many brothers in the 21st century would rather be friends than engage in jealous fits of violence.

Some call this development a sign of sociological evolution.

Fans of heavyweight boxing call it a damned shame.

If either Vitali or Wladimir Klitschko had a little Cain in them, we might be treated to the fight that would resurrect mainstream interest in the heavyweight division. But the Ukrainian brothers, unfortunately, are nice, intelligent boys who were raised right. And the boxing world

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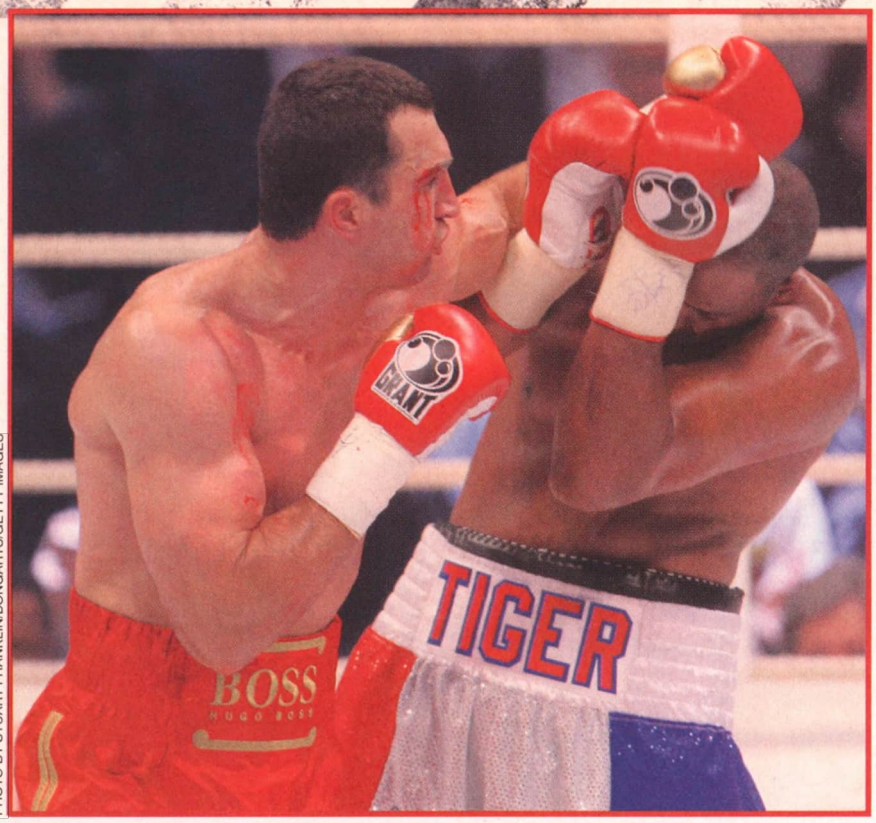

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The latest in a string of uninspiring performances by Wladimir came on July 12 in Frankfort, Germany, where he knocked out Tony Thompson in the 11th round. "Dr. Steel Hammer" hasn't been in a rousing fight since his 2005 slugfest with Sam Peter.

must suffer the consequences of Mama Klitschko teaching her children well.

Wladimir and Vitali have repeatedly vowed never to battle in the prize ring, and to a large extent, it is their mother who gets the blame for this. Mark Taffet, the senior vice president of sports operations and pay-per-view for HBO, made the mistake back in 2004 of asking the Klitschkos the question on everyone's mind, and the response he got was typical of the response they've been giving for the last decade.

"During a meeting with Vitali and Wladimir in my office, where they were signing some promotional items," Taffet recalled, "I asked out of curiosity, if they both held a heavyweight championship belt at the same time, would the world ever see Klitschko vs. Klitschko? And they both stood up, and 13 feet and 500 pounds of Klitschko scowled down at me. They didn't utter a word, nor did they need to utter a word; I understood the response.

"But after my heart returned to its

PHOTO BY RALPH ORLOWSKI/GETTY IMAGES

It has been jokingly suggested that the only way to get the Klitschko brothers to fight each other would be if a woman came between them. However, we don't think this is the woman for the job. Actually, it's not a woman—it's German actor Michael Herbig in drag.

normal beat, they smiled, and they said, 'Our mother would never allow that.'"

Okay, okay, maybe we shouldn't be so hard on Nadja Klitschko. It's an understandable stance for two loving brothers to take, refusing to play into the sick tabloid dreams of our devolving culture by accepting millions of dollars to punch, and potentially do serious damage to, each other. This fight is never, ever going to happen, and on many levels, that's probably for the best.

It's just that right now, with the heavyweight division at a low point, with no other fights on the horizon that could generate serious money on pay-per-view (other than *maybe* a rematch between Wladimir and Samuel Peter, if Peter beats the comebacking Vitali first), we can't help but dream our sick dreams a little bit. And particularly if Vitali beats Peter, likely making the brothers the top two heavies in THE RING rankings, how could we not fantasize about Klitschko vs. Klitschko for world supremacy? Screw ethics and morals; if that fight, with those stakes, and all of the uncomfortable sibling plotlines that go along with it, doesn't raise your antennae, then you're officially dead inside.

And if you take a close look at Wladimir's last four fights—all of which have come since he ascended to the division's top spot, making his every move vitally important to the sport as a whole—you see an especially dreary sequence of events that increases our collective need for something compelling. There was a pointless wipeout of fringe contender Ray Austin, a drubbing of faded/injured Lamon Brewster, a torturous jab-athon against Sultan Ibragimov, and, in the most competitive of the four fights (sadly), an 11th-round kayo of overmatched Tony Thompson. The heavyweight division needs to generate interest *somehow*, and it begins with Wladimir, the closest thing we have to a legitimate champion, taking a fight that matters.

Noted mainstream sports columnist Bill Simmons of ESPN.com was writing about a fight that mattered in May '07, Floyd Mayweather vs. Oscar De La Hoya, when he spun from that to a discussion of Klitschko vs. Klitschko:

OTHER BROTHERS

The Klitschkos aren't the only brothers who might have made for a compelling fight. Here are five other boxing bro combos from the last three decades who were close enough in weight and ability to make it interesting, with some speculation as to what would have happened:

Juan Manuel Marquez vs. Rafael Marquez: The Marquezes have a strong argument for being the pound-for-pound best brother act in boxing history, but Rafael doesn't have all that strong of an argument that he could beat his big brother. Punch resistance has always been a slight weakness in Rafael's game, and against Juan Manuel, who's generally been two to three weight classes above him, it would be a huge factor.

Leon Spinks vs. Michael Spinks: The Spinkses are the only brothers to both hold the lineal heavyweight title, but Michael was at his best at light heavy. Still, to fight older brother Leon, you figure he'd bulk up, and the veteran Michael who upset a 35-year-old Larry Holmes was better—and much more consistent—than the novice Leon who upset a 36-year-old Muhammad Ali (and later lost to Holmes in three rounds). The pick is Michael on points.

Khaosai Galaxy vs. Khaokor Galaxy: There was no comparison in terms of ability between boxing's first (and so far, only) twins to claim major titles. Khaosai was a Hall of Famer who made 19 successful defenses of his junior bantam belt, and Khaokor was a fine but forgettable fighter who lost his bantam belt in his first defense. Three pounds won't make a difference here, as it's Khaosai all the way.

Bruce Curry vs. Donald Curry: It's easy to assume this would be a mismatch, since older brother Bruce had eight losses spread across a spotty career and Donald was briefly considered boxing's pound-for-pound best. Don't forget, though: Bruce knocked down a prime, undefeated Wilfred Benitez three times en route to losing a very controversial split decision. He could compete with ultra-talented fighters. Donald, bigger and better, would win, but it wouldn't be a walkover.

Floyd Mayweather vs. Roger Mayweather: Keep your fingers crossed, folks—this one may still happen. It wouldn't exactly be prime vs. prime, however. Under those guidelines, you had a skilled fringe contender against a championship-caliber fighter, and though Big Floyd was bigger by a weight class or two, Roger was more gifted. The prediction is that the younger brother leads on points when a melee breaks out, the ring fills up with dozens of Mayweathers, and it ends in a double DQ.

—E.R.

Leon and Michael Spinks in 1985

ALEXANDER HEINMANN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Chris Byrd, seen nailing Wladimir with a right to the face, has fought both Klitschko brothers, and thinks that Wladimir punches a bit harder, but that Vitali has a more difficult style to solve and is mentally tougher. Byrd actually fought his brother Patrick in the amateurs.

"What happens when Oscar retires?" Simmons wondered. "Only one mega-fight remains that doesn't involve Mike Tyson and a grizzly bear: the Klitschko brothers breaking their lifelong vow and battling for the heavyweight title, which won't happen unless they both go broke (impossible) or a girl comes between them (improbable, but not impossible). So unless Don King hires some uberhooker to play one against the other, or unless someone improbably emerges as the Tiger Woods of boxing, this could be the last Big Fight for a long time."

Simmons was wrong about boxing failing to follow Mayweather-De La Hoya with anything meaningful, but he was ahead of the curve in writing about the heavyweight division needing Wladimir vs. Vitali. As Vitali is married with kids, the uberhooker is a real longshot, and presumably so is Wladimir making a pass at his big brother's wife. As far as we know, not even the heated debate over who got to be "Dr. Iron Fist" and who got to be "Dr. Steel Hammer" could force them to come to blows.

We all have to accept reality: No matter how great the public demand becomes, Klitschko vs. Klitschko is pure fantasy.

Suggesting, however, that the fight could be a scorcher is anything but fantasy. Sure, both Klitschkos have left fans snoring on their couches on occasion. But when brothers step between the ropes, they tend not to hold anything back.

"We tried to kill each other," former heavyweight beltholder Chris Byrd said of his sparring sessions with his brothers. "Me and my brother Patrick, we actually fought each other twice on shows when we were younger, and we always put on the best performance of the night. He'd hit me after the bell, I mean, we'd go at it. And when I got older, I'd spar with my older brothers, and they'd always try to knock baby brother out because he thinks he's the best. So if the Klitschkos actually fought each other, somebody's gonna get knocked out!"

Byrd, of course, has additional insight into what might happen if the Klitschkos fought, since he's one of three fighters to have shared the ring with both of them. When asked to make a pick, he hedged his bets somewhat, saying Wladimir would have the edge right now because Vitali hasn't fought in nearly four years, but that prime vs.

prime, the elder Klitschko would be the favorite (an opinion that this writer happens to agree with completely).

"Vitali's a little taller and a little rangier than his brother, so he would try to stay outside and set his right hand up to try and knock out Wladimir. Vitali would keep him at bay and set everything up, whereas Wladimir would have to probably change his tactics, because he hasn't really fought anybody taller than him that can box and punch also. He would have to change up his game a little bit more than Vitali would. Wladimir hits harder. He punches with more authority than Vitali. But Vitali is a little tougher. He can stay in the pocket, like he did against Lennox Lewis, whereas Wladimir has been knocked out three times and I think he's a little bit gun-shy.

"I know I got beaten by Wladimir twice, and I won when I fought Vitali, but I can tell you, Vitali has a harder style to face. It's tough to get close to him and hit him. So it would have to be an advantage to Vitali, if Vitali could get healthy, come back, get some fights under his belt, and be the same fighter he was a few years ago."

Those are big "ifs"—almost on par with wondering if a woman could come between the brothers. But taking all of those "ifs" and running with them, it's interesting to speculate about just how well this fight could sell. Taffet declined to comment on the matter, as any speculation on his part could be construed as HBO PPV disrespecting the oft-stated position of the Klitschkos by seriously considering the earning potential of the fight.

Fortunately, THE RING is free to make hypothetical projections. A few questions to consider: Despite the sensationalist appeal of a brother fighting a brother, would potential buyers be skeptical about how hard they'd actually fight once the bell rang? Do American fans really care enough about these Eastern European heavyweights to pay to watch them? How concerned should we be that the only major pay-per-view either has headlined (Vitali vs. Danny Williams) generated 120,000 buys, a paltry five percent of the business Mayweather-De La Hoya did?

PHOTO BY ROBERT LABERGE/GETTY IMAGES

Vitali hasn't fought since he bowled over Danny Williams for an eighth-round knockout at Las Vegas' Mandalay Bay in December 2004. He's gone into training several times since, only to suffer a series of injuries that have required surgery and rehab.

Add it all up, and this fight seems to have a wider range of possibilities than any other in recent memory. Even on the low end, it clearly exceeds Wladimir-Peter II or any other fight involving active heavyweights, but if the public doesn't believe they'll fight hard and doesn't care because they aren't Americans, the buy rate could be as low as 300,000. On the other hand, if the sheer spectacle of two brothers fighting for the heavyweight championship gathers steam the way many of us suspect it would, this could be the first million-buy heavyweight bout since Lewis-Tyson.

The hunch here is that it would come a lot closer to the latter than the former. The combination of the sporting significance of the event and the car-wreck curiosity of it is a tough one-two to resist.

Alas, it will never become reality. These brothers' principles are far too high to sell out to that degree.

Besides, if they ever did sign to fight, Vitali would probably just get injured in training camp anyway. ■

Enzo Calzaghe

"I'm Addicted To Winning"

When Joe Calzaghe was born on March 23, 1972, in London's Hammersmith Hospital, his father, Enzo, was working in a factory that manufactured nails and screws. He also had a part-time job as a waiter in their rented bed-and-breakfast accommodation. More than 36 years later, Calzaghe the boxer is a British sports icon, recently the recipient of a Commander of the British Empire (one step below a knighthood in the Queen's birthday honors list), and the reigning Sports Personality of the Year, as voted for by viewers of the BBC. Enzo Calzaghe, who never even boxed as an amateur, is the Trainer of the Year, recognized by the BBC, the Boxing Writers' Association of America, and THE RING. Even by boxing's standards, it is a remarkable story.

The little ball of energy from Sardinia, an island off the coast of Italy, is an irrepressible personality. At the age of 20, having completed his national service in Milan, he set out on a tour of Europe to find his fortune, carrying a suitcase with a guitar strapped on his back. It became a journey of discovery and survival. For two years he was a busker on the streets of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Paris, and Vienna, sleeping on park benches when he had no money for a room. But not even those nights could dampen his enthusiasm.

"It was my choice to travel the world and I chose my own path," Enzo said. "I didn't fear nothing. Every morning I woke up with a smile and, whether I had money or no money, it didn't bother me one damn bit. Nothing to eat? Not a problem. I will eat tomorrow. That was my philosophy and it's still my philosophy."

Eventually, he married Jackie Phillips and settled in the old mining town of Newbridge in the valleys of Wales. They had a son and Enzo instilled in him his love for football (soccer) and boxing. By the age of 10, the boy was adept at hitting the bag and soon he was a standout performer, becoming the first British boxer to win three consecutive Amateur Boxing Association titles at different weights since before World War II. The former busker trained him every step of the way and, through thick and thin, he has remained in the corner of the world light heavyweight and super middleweight champion, while establishing a reputation in his own right.

Enzo Calzaghe's stable of fighters today includes Enzo Maccarinelli, the former WBO cruiserweight titleholder, Gavin Rees, who won the WBA junior welterweight title in July last year but lost it eight months later, Commonwealth junior middleweight champion Bradley Pryce, world middleweight title challenger Gary Lockett, and young prospect Nathan Cleverly. When THE RING's European correspondent, Brian Doogan, spoke to Calzaghe in late-July at the Calzaghe Gym in Newbridge, Enzo was beginning to prepare his son for a world light heavyweight title defense against Roy Jones on November 8, at Madison Square Garden in New York. Doogan reports:

"Joe Calzaghe's personality is more introverted and he is most comfortable away from the spotlight, but Enzo is an extrovert by nature. The fame and adulation that the younger Calzaghe has achieved, but could just as easily live without, Calzaghe Senior has always sought. He recognized Joe's talent from a young age and, simultaneously, he found his own calling. It is hard to imagine Joe having been trained by anyone else but his dad. Their synergy, more akin to big brother and little brother than father-son, has produced one of the most accomplished careers in the history of British boxing, one that is drawing to an end. But Enzo Calzaghe will battle on regardless."

The Ring: There have been some conflicting statements from Joe about whether or not he will retire at the end of this year, so let's start off by asking you if the November 8 fight between Joe and Roy Jones will be Joe's last?

Enzo Calzaghe: This is not the first time that Joe has talked about retirement, but, if you stand by the premise that a boxer is only as good as his last fight, you would have to say that Joe has performed at the highest level in his last several fights. So there is no reason to believe that Joe is ready to bow out. We will see how he performs against Roy Jones. If he is happy with his performance and I am happy with his performance, he might move on to another one. Ultimately, of course, that will be down to him.

The Ring: If he does retire, where will that leave you? Will you hang up the

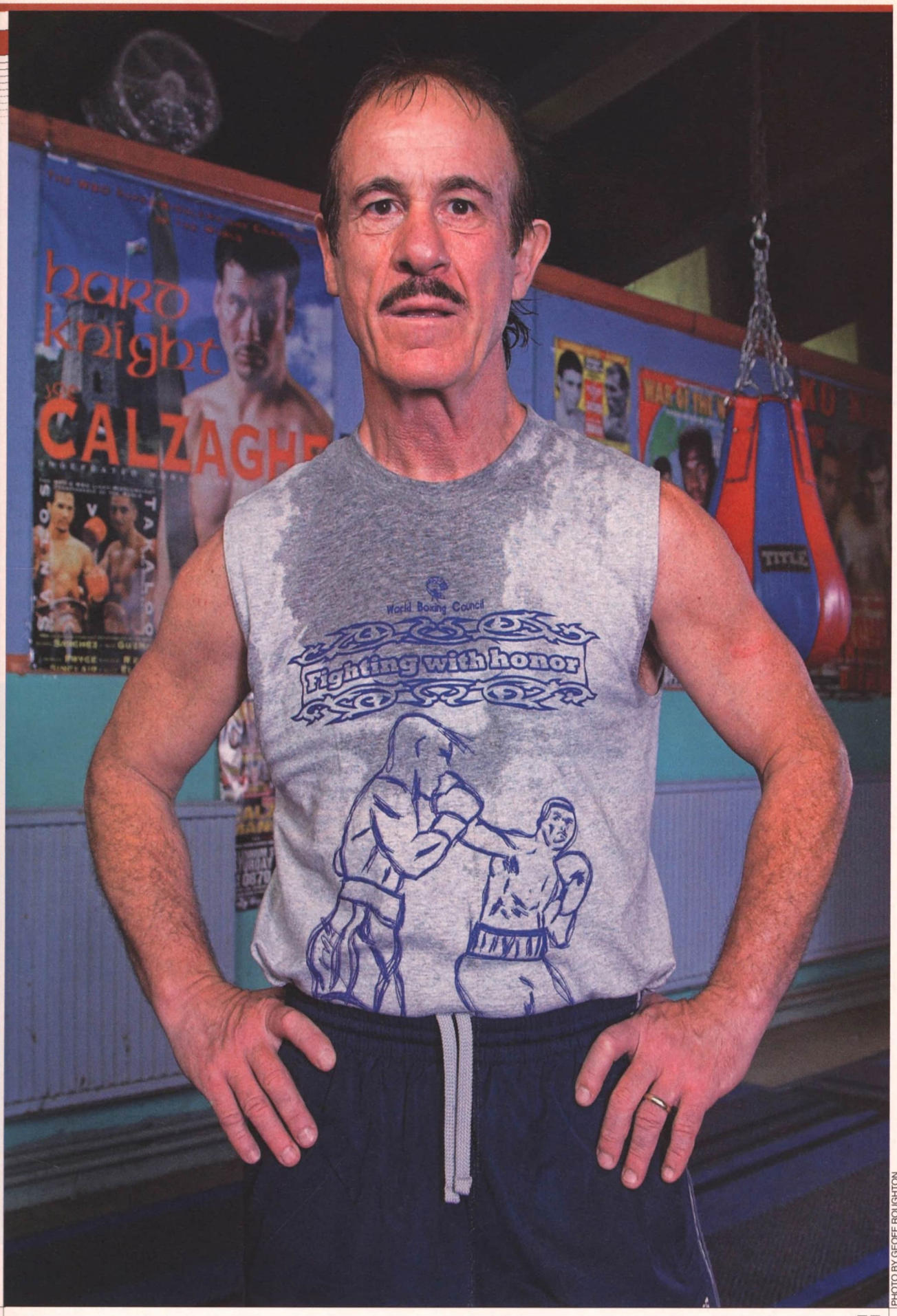


PHOTO BY GEOFF ROUGHTON

mitts when Joe hangs up the gloves?

EC: Why would I? Why should I not carry on after Joe retires, perhaps in partnership with Joe? The world is our oyster. Joe could become the main trainer and I could work with him.

The Ring: You think that Joe will train fighters when he retires?

EC: I think he will and maybe he will get into promoting also. I can't see Joe not being involved in boxing. But from my own perspective, I owe it to myself and to the other boys I train to stay involved in the sport. I couldn't just turn around and say to them, "Well, Joe's gone, so I'm packing it in also." I couldn't do that.

Those boys respect me and I respect each and every one of them as individuals. Gavin Rees was nine years old when he first came to my gym, Bradley Pryce was nine or 10 years old, Nathan Cleverley was 12, and so on. I started to train Enzo Maccarinelli because I wanted to train him. I wanted to train Gavin Rees and I want to train Bradley Pryce. Not because they are successful people, I actually want to be with them and I want to be successful with them because I'm addicted to winning. I love winning. If I'm playing cards—it doesn't matter if we're betting pennies—I have got to win. I love victory, so I will not quit this business until I have to quit.

The Ring: It was suggested that you were approached recently by producers of *The Contender* TV series to train an international team against an American team. What happened?

EC: Jeff Wald (co-executive producer of the Tournament of Contenders promotional company) called me and asked me if I would be involved in the series, and it was an honor to be asked. But filming was scheduled to start in Singapore on September 16, and was due to last five weeks. I just couldn't commit myself to being there during that time because I'll be training all of my fighters here for important fights.

The Ring: Your route into boxing was not the traditional route. You were born in Bancali, a small town in Sardinia, you were two years old when your father moved the family to Bedford in England, you went back to Sardinia at the age of 12 or 13 and worked on the island as a butcher, a barman, a chef, a cleaner, a clothes shop assistant, and you even had a gig as a bass guitarist in your uncle Vicenzo's band. Where did boxing come into it?

EC: From the age of four or five, I always had the gloves on. My father would put them on me and, just like I would show Joe many years later, he showed me how to box in our living room. My background was football and boxing, mostly boxing. I used to watch it with my dad on our little black-and-white TV. Dullio Loi, Henry Cooper, Brian London, I was brought up watching these guys, Muhammad Ali when I was older. Salvatore Burruni was from our town in Sardinia, Bancali, and boxing was part of the culture. Nino Benvenuti was my favorite, and through watching all of these fighters, I was learning all the time.

In Bedford, I was always getting into scraps when the other kids would call me names because I was Italian. I would go after them, chase them down,

PHOTO BY GEOFF ROUGHTON

Enzo poses outside of his gym, an unimposing-looking structure nestled in the Welsh valleys. It is here that The Ring's 2007 Trainer of the Year molds young men into champions.

but I never used to fight. I always boxed. The movement was there, I was up on my toes and I jabbed away, just like Dad had taught me. Joe Bugner was in my school. He wasn't a boxer then, but, growing up, I dreamt of being a boxer before Dad brought us back to Sardinia when I was 12 or 13. Even when I ended up in Wales years later, in the town of Newbridge, I still had this itch to be a fighter. There was a gym close to my house and I did a bit of karate, but I felt I was too old to start boxing. I was 24 years old then, working as a bus conductor, and my wife, Jackie, and I were starting to bring up a family, so the dream died, which happens in life sometimes.

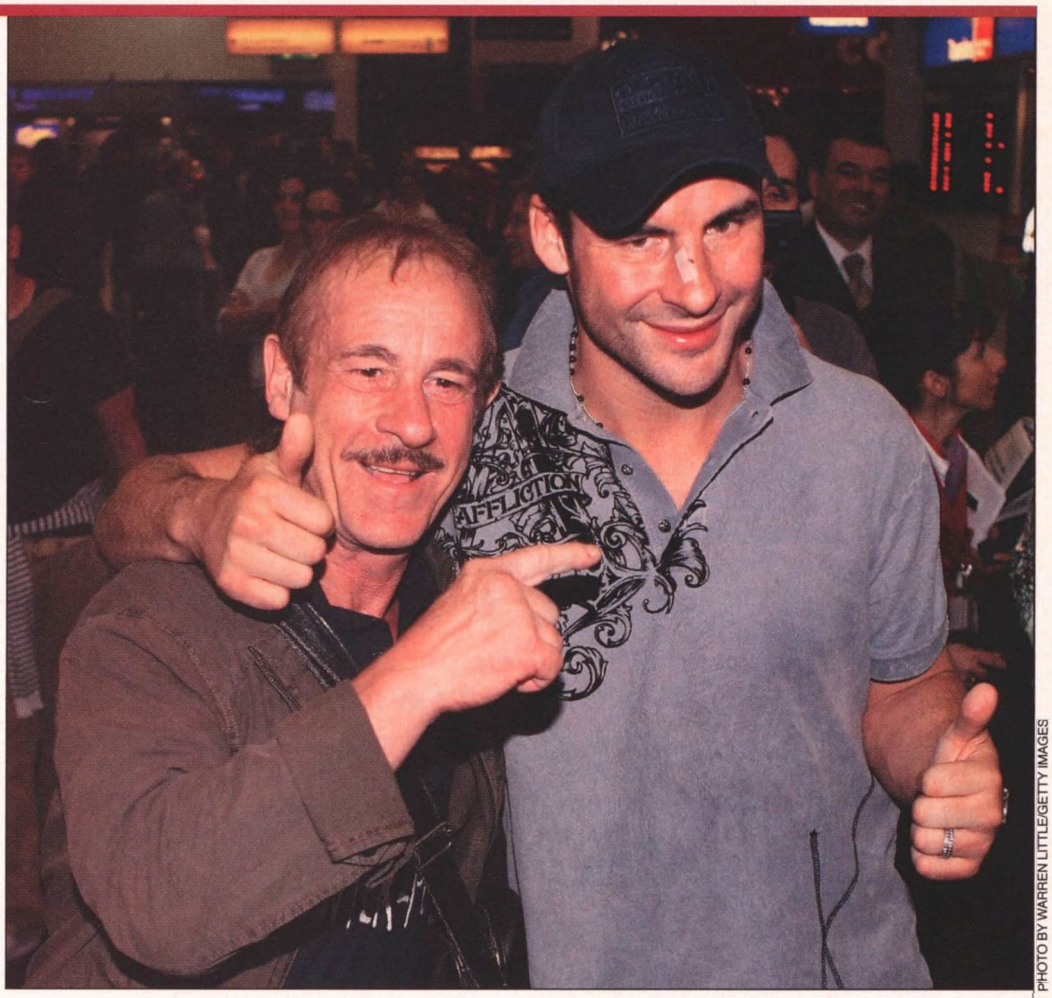


PHOTO BY WARREN LITTLE/GETTY IMAGES

Enzo and Joe arrive at London's Gatewick after returning to the U.K. from Las Vegas, where Joe took the light heavyweight title from Bernard Hopkins. Despite their contrasting personalities, father and son have an excellent relationship.

The Ring: The story of how you ended up in Newbridge is extraordinary. You left Sassari with a suitcase and a guitar strapped on your back, and you told your dad that you would not return home until you were a millionaire. But there must have been nights when you were sleeping out on a park bench in Amsterdam, Paris, or somewhere else in Europe that you thought about packing it all in and heading for home?

EC: The one time that I might have gone back home, fate intervened. I went to visit my aunt Nina in Bournemouth, and when I got there she and Uncle Pumpino were loading up the car. "We're leaving tonight for Sardinia. Come home with us," she said. I told her I couldn't, that I had promised my dad I would be a millionaire before I went back to Bancali. So she was able to fix me up with a little job at a restaurant, and I was able to eat and sleep there. But Bournemouth wasn't for me. So I headed for Southampton and got the boat to Le Havre in France, and from there I started hitchhiking, intending to go back to Italy. I guess that I had had enough.

But I ended up in a little French village in the middle of nowhere, the worse for wear because I had been drinking. I had no idea how I got there, and the next thing I knew, a *gendarme* (police officer) was waking me up under a lamppost. I told him I was on my way to Italy and he pointed me in the general direction. So I set out on my way, hitched a ride in someone's car, and before I knew it, I was all the way back in bloody Le Havre! For some reason, I decided to get the boat back across to Southampton, and I met a guy in Bournemouth who said he was going to Cardiff, so I just hopped into his car and went with him.

We arrived in the afternoon, pulled into a Wimpy restaurant to get ourselves something to eat, and that is where I met Jackie Phillips. When she took our order she got cheesed off with me because I kept changing my mind about having coffee or tea. For me, it was love at first sight. She looked Italian with her dark hair, and I just had the feeling that she was familiar. So I got cheeky, I asked her out, and we met that evening after she finished work. I met her mum after a couple of weeks, and we were married four weeks later. Joe was born in 1972, and we were living in London at the time. We moved to Sardinia a little while after that, but Jackie got a bit homesick, so we came back to Wales and we've been here ever since.

The Ring: You and your brothers, Uccio and Sergio, formed a band, and it seemed that music, not boxing, might make the Calzaghe name well known.

EC: We had a couple of bands, one was called Foreign Legion, another The Brothers SUE (Sergio, Uccio, and

Enzo), and we did a lot of shows in London. We were the backing band for Paul Young and Shirley Bassey. One night we were set to do a gig with Shirley Bassey at a club called Blazers in Luton, and I don't know how we did it. The night before the gig, I went out drinking with my brothers, and it was 3 a.m. when we came back to Uccio's house in Milton Keynes.

About 100 yards from the house we heard this cat up a tree, so Uccio decided to climb up to save the cat. "What are you doing, Uccio?" I asked him. "I'm getting this cat down," he said. Of course, the next thing I heard was, "Enzo, I can't get down." So I had to climb up the tree to grab Uccio and the cat and I managed to get them down safely. But before I could get down, the branch snapped and I landed on my shoulder and my neck and broke my collarbone. "You'll be all right, Enzo," said Uccio. "The show's tomorrow night, you'll be all right."

But I was dying! They got me home, put a bandage around my shoulder and, in fact, it never set right. I still have a bone protruding out of my shoulder. But the next night I got up on the stage, morphine pumping through me, and someone even had to put my arm on the guitar because I couldn't move my arm, I could only move my fingers. I had to stand there with a smile on my face, playing guitar as Shirley Bassey sang, but I was in absolute agony.

The Ring: You used to hitchhike regularly from Newbridge to your brother's house in Milton Keynes, about 160 miles away, when you were in the band. Sometimes Joe would hitchhike with you and he really thought that one day his dad was going to be a pop star, appearing in the charts, with a record label producing hit after hit.

EC: I wanted to be a musician and I spent five years trying to get to the top. Then one day Uccio told me that we had hit the jackpot. EMI wanted to take us to America. Alleluia! We drank champagne until the early hours. It was, "America, here we come!" Then a funny thing happened. The next day I had to hitchhike back from Milton Keynes, bypassing Oxford, through Swindon, and then on to Cardiff. I got to Oxford and I didn't feel very good. I got to Swindon and I still didn't feel very good. Then I got to Newport and my mind and pulse were racing. I was thinking about all sorts of things that going to America would

PHOTO BY GEOFF ROUGHTON

Enzo, who is understandably proud of what he and his boxers have accomplished, holds the bag for undefeated light heavyweight prospect Nathan Cleverley during a workout at the Newbridge Boxing Club.

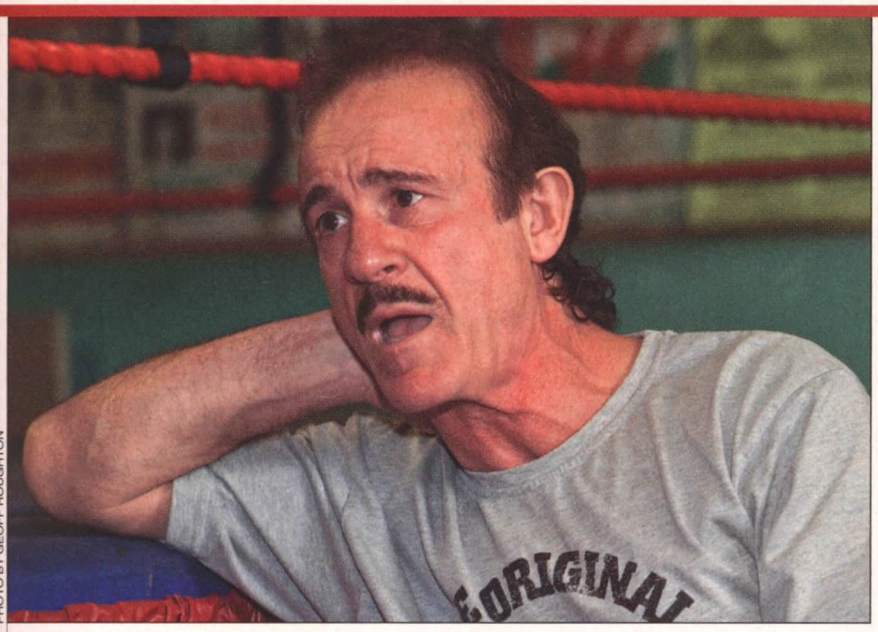


PHOTO BY GEOFF ROUGHTON

"I used to watch [boxing] with my dad on our little black-and-white TV. Dullio Loi, Henry Cooper, Brian London, I was brought up watching these guys, Muhammad Ali when I was older. Salvatore Burruni was from our town in Sardinia, Bancali, and boxing was part of the culture. Nino Benvenuti was my favorite, and through watching all of these fighters, I was learning all the time."

involve for Jackie, my two daughters, Melissa and Sonia, and Joe, who had started boxing. So I rang my brother from Newport and he was all excited. "What about last night, Enzo? America is going to be magic." I said nothing. "What's wrong?" he asked. "Uccio, I'm packing it in, I've played my last gig." He couldn't believe it. "What? We have a contract. This is our ticket to the big time. You must be joking." I wasn't joking. "I don't want it, Uccio," I said and I put the phone down. That was the last gig I did.

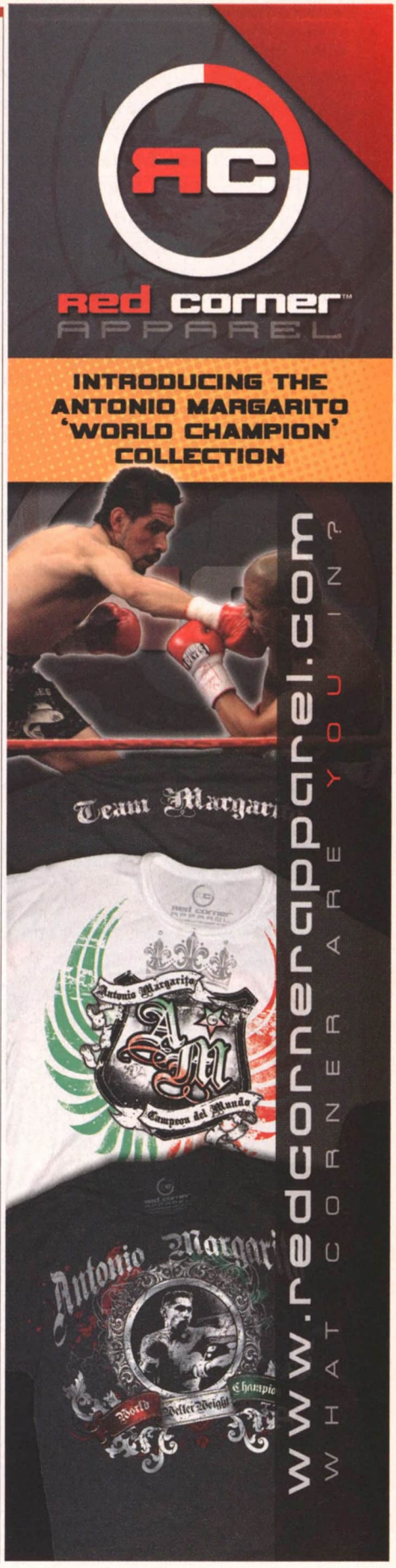
The Ring: Did you ever regret that decision?

EC: No way! I have always done what I feel I've got to do. That's the type of guy I am. I have never had a boss. I've never worked for anybody. Even in boxing. I didn't work for Mickey Duff and I don't work for Frank Warren. I'm not governed by anybody. I've always made my own decisions. Today I have a multimillion pounds business here, which I run out of this gym, and where's my help? I'm my own company, just one man. I do everything myself.

The Ring: How did you develop your style and technique of training?

EC: I learnt everything from watching fighters like Muhammad Ali, Sugar Ray Leonard, and Marvelous Marvin Hagler. I admired their skills, and I had Joe punching a rolled-up piece of carpet before he ever set foot in a boxing gym. He used that as a punch bag. The first time he went to the gym, they thought he had boxed before. The trainer said, "You have very good kid there."

People say that parents should not push their kids, but I don't believe in that at all. If you have a kid who has a talent for something, for sport, music, whatever, you have got to push them. That's



what I believe. The day that they don't make it they will say, "My old man never gave me any encouragement." Of course, if it all goes wrong and they were pushed, they can say, "My dad ruined my life." But I have never been scared of pushing Joe. From an early age I recognized his talent and I made him follow a regimen that was designed to make him into the boxer that he is today. Joe did not live a normal life. He didn't socialize with friends and he didn't go out to do the things that most teenagers do. He began to train like a professional fighter when he was still at school, and I trained him from Day One.

People used to slag us off, looking at me, and saying, "He doesn't know what he's doing." But Joe was winning ABA (Amateur Boxing Association) titles every year. One year at the Assemble Rooms in Derby, I had Bradley Pryce, Byron Pryce, Delroy Pryce, and Gavin Rees all competing in the schoolboy finals. The next thing I heard people say was, "If Joe turns pro, he will be destroyed." So I took Joe to another trainer in Newport, drove him down there for two weeks, and one day I went to pick him up after training and I knew that something was wrong. "What's wrong, Joe?" I asked him. He said, "I'm not happy, Dad. Will you train me?" So it came from Joe. I said that I would and that's the way it's been ever since.

The Ring: At the moment, things are not going well with Frank Warren and Joe. In fact, the termination of their relationship is the subject of two lawsuits. How does this affect you and the other fighters whom you train who are still promoted by Frank?

EC: I am there for the boys and I will make the right decisions for them. My job is to train them and that is what I do. There is nothing more to say except that I will carry on doing that.

The Ring: You said that you were shocked by the $2-million lawsuit that Frank brought against Joe for an alleged breach of contract.

EC: I'm sad and I was shocked. Look, I have two daughters and one son, and they do their own thing. I don't own them. When they became 18 years old, they were free to make their own decisions, even if it was against my will. My daughters got married when they wanted to get married, not when I wanted them to get married. You cannot own people. You can own horses, but not human beings. You don't need enemies in life and I have always preferred to have friends. This should be done amicably, and time will tell if we are able to have an amicable finish, but everyone has the right to live their own life.

The Ring: But how does this affect you and your other fighters?

EC: This is a business and my judgment is not clouded by animosity and hate. I hope this is sorted out amicably so that we can work together and I hope that Joe and Frank sort out their differences in a mature and proper manner.

The Ring: Let's look at Joe's last fight against Bernard Hopkins. There was a lot of needle and acrimony, and when it was over, Hopkins did not have too many kind words for the fighter who had beaten him. Joe is dismissive of Hopkins now, as he was before the fight, but what do you think?

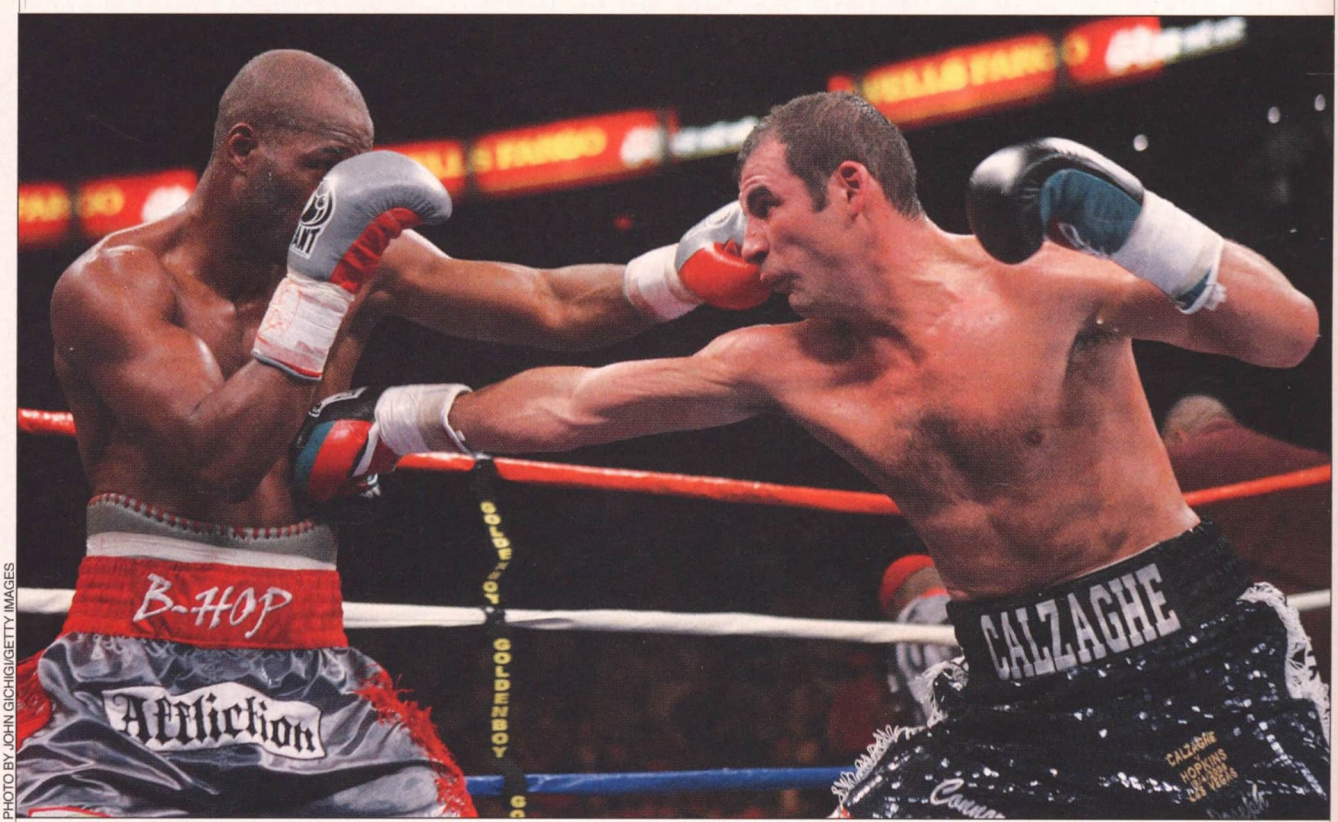


PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Hopkins and Calzaghe exchange love taps during their less-than-thrilling bout in Las Vegas on April 19, 2008. Enzo blames defending light heavyweight champion Hopkins for the monotonous nature of the match, claiming "The Executioner" tried to "steal the fight."

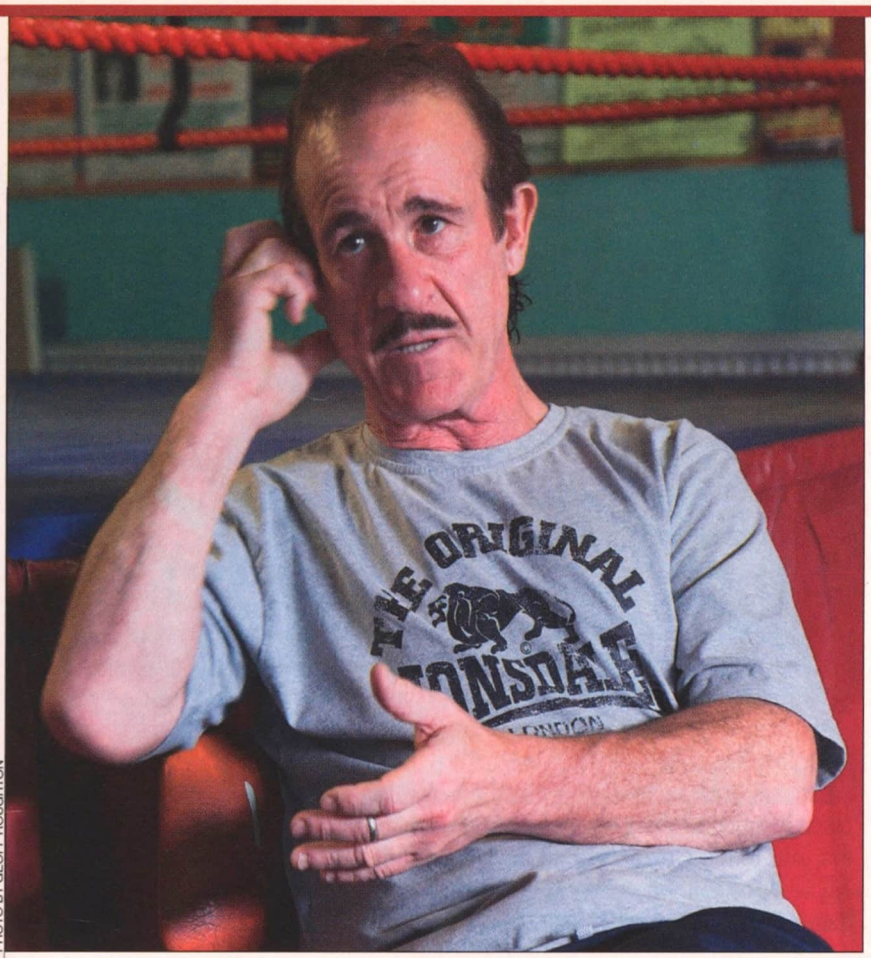


PHOTO BY GEOFF ROUGHTON

"I have never had a boss. I've never worked for anybody. Even in boxing. I didn't work for Mickey Duff and I don't work for Frank Warren. I'm not governed by anybody. I've always made my own decisions."

EC: It would not be right to say that Bernard Hopkins doesn't have class, because he's a class act. What he has achieved in his career is amazing. I've never gone along with the "legend" part, with the people who say he's a legend, but everybody has their favorites and the guy could fight. Does that mean that I think he was a brilliant boxer and I admired him? No, it doesn't. As a boxer, I have never liked his style. There is not one fight I have ever seen with Bernard Hopkins in which he turned me on, not even his fight against Felix Trinidad. Trinidad was a welterweight and, physically, he was dominated because he was a welterweight.

I'm not stupid. I haven't been in boxing all my life to be fooled. Hopkins is 43 years old now and he's still surviving because he is boxing's equivalent of Dick Turpin [an 18th-century English highwayman]. He is nothing but a highway robber. He boxed pretty well against Jermain Taylor, but it was a fencing match. I always wanted the fight with Hopkins. I said before the fight that I hope this guy turns up to box. I said to him, "I want you to perform the way that a true champion performs." But he did not. He did nothing but try to rob and steal. He put Joe down in the first round and then he cowered off. He had no intention of

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making the fight. He came to steal the fight and he can cry as long as he likes about the decision, but he got his just desserts. He got whupped and he got whupped by an underperforming Joe. If Joe had shown his true class, he would have destroyed Hopkins. I agree with Freddie Roach; I think that Hopkins should now retire. He showed against Joe that he has no heart for the fight any more. It's all about his ego trip. The man is 43 years old; he should be giving a chance to the new generation. Who wants to see this old man any longer? He should retire and let the new generation take over. What good is he to the new generation of kids? What can he teach them? He can only teach them how to steal.

America is starved of champions at the moment because the old people are still there: Evander Holyfield, Hopkins, Shane Mosley, Winky Wright, Oscar De La Hoya. They are all part of the old generation and all they are doing is recycling these guys. It is time for the promoters and the TV companies over there to say, "No more."

The Ring: Would you like Joe to fight Kelly Pavlik?

EC: I'm not going to start throwing snowballs at Kelly Pavlik. He boxed my boy, Gary Lockett, and he did what he had to do. But my boy didn't do what *he* had to do, and that's the bottom line. When a guy doesn't do what he's supposed to do, how can you tell how good the other guy is? I take my hat off to Pavlik because he did what he had to do, but if he punched that hard, I would have been picking Gary Lockett up off the canvas. So let's get it right about his punching power. He's good, but to me, he's a one-paced machinist. He does what he does and he does it well, but he's got no angles, no cuteness. He won an eliminator against Edison Miranda, the guy who got knocked out in four rounds by Arthur Abraham, and then he beat Jermain Taylor. So what. People were rubbishing Taylor as a champion, yet he had Pavlik all over the place in round two and he couldn't finish the job. If Joe Calzaghe had been in Taylor's position, Pavlik would not have gotten up, let's be honest about it.

Pavlik is being built up into a superstar in America because egotists like Bernard Hopkins are still around and America *needs* a superstar. They don't have any superstars in boxing after De La Hoya. So far so good for Pavlik, but there's a difference between a guy who has defended his title once and a guy like Joe who has defended his title 21 times. Gary Lockett is my fighter, but, bless him, Gary is no Joe Calzaghe.

The Ring: What about Britain's hope for the heavyweight division, David Haye, who beat another of your fighters, Enzo Maccarinelli?

EC: I have a bone to pick with Haye and his trainer, Adam Booth. They said that I showed no respect after he beat Maccarinelli, and that's not true. I showed respect, but I didn't change my opinion about him. Haye only did what he did because Enzo allowed him to do it. Enzo didn't perform. That was not Enzo Maccarinelli. Enzo condemned himself. He's my fighter and he knows that he didn't perform on the night. There were no more than three good punches thrown in two rounds, so I can't

Even though middleweight champion Kelly Pavlik disposed of the Calzaghe-trained Gary Lockett inside of three rounds, Enzo still doesn't think Pavlik is as big a puncher as most people believe. A match between Pavlik and Calzaghe has been frequently discussed, but as of now, they have different plans.

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

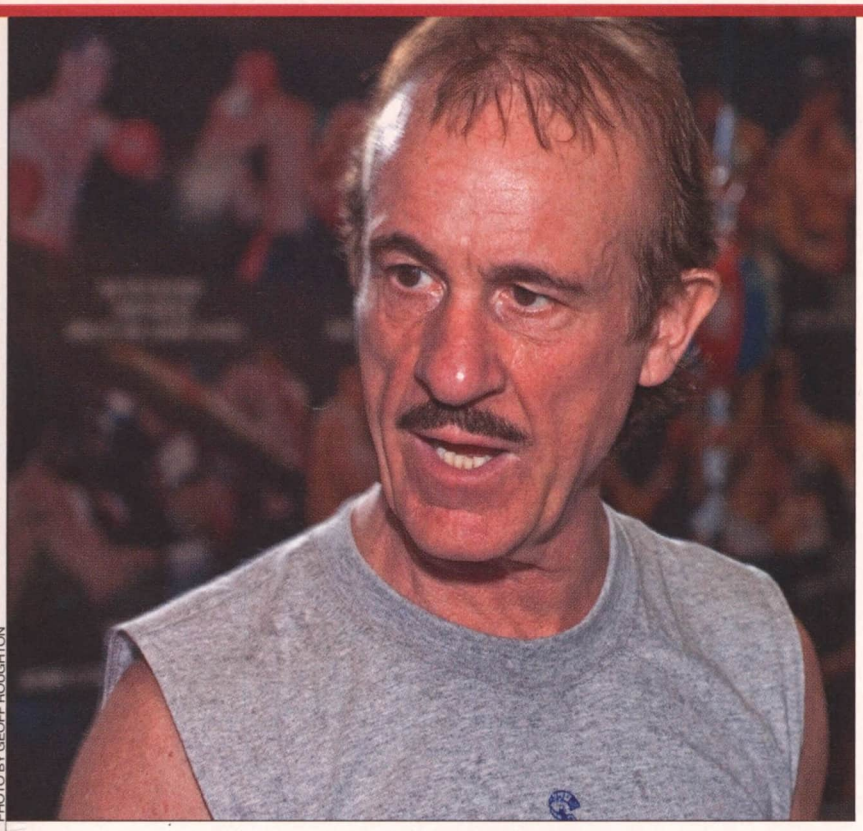

PHOTO BY GEOFF ROUGHTON

"Wladimir Klitschko is the worst heavyweight champion I have seen in my life. He is worse than Primo Carnera. I don't know him personally, but as a boxer, he does nothing for me at all."

say this is the best guy I have seen at cruiserweight.

The Ring: But do you think that he can be successful as a heavyweight?

EC: *Anyone* can be successful at heavyweight right now. I could fatten up Joe to 17½ stone (245 pounds) and he would win the title. Wladimir Klitschko is the worst heavyweight champion I have seen in my life. He is worse than Primo Carnera. I don't know him personally, but as a boxer he does nothing for me at all. Haye has not convinced me, however. He didn't spark out Enzo, so where are the massive punches going to come from? There is a lot of dead squid in the heavyweight division, so maybe he can be competitive, but he isn't going to be the savior of the heavyweight division, not in my opinion.

The Ring: Amir Khan recently acquired the services of former Cuban national coach Jorge Rubio and he says that he is ready to challenge for the world lightweight title now. What is your assessment of Khan?

EC: He is a class act, but maybe he has become too big too quickly, and this could be his downfall. Sometimes if you become a superstar too early, you get carried away with your persona. Joe didn't have respect until he was in his 30s, and Frank Warren has said that he's trying to slow Khan down, but the public is demanding more of him because Amir wants to box for the title now. If he was to lose, he could lose some of his appeal. Amir Khan doesn't need to rush. He's a good fighter, he has a lot to learn, but it's there, so he shouldn't rush himself.

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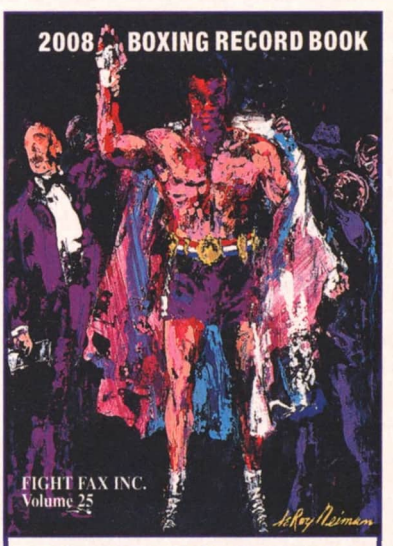

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The Ring: Boxing in Britain appears to be flourishing today, but not so in America. Why is that?

EC: It's simple: We are very good. There are people who still say that a boxer has to go to America to learn this and to learn that. Why and to learn what? I won the American Boxing Writers Trainer of the Year award. THE RING named me Trainer of the Year. Billy Graham has trained Ricky Hatton from Day One. Jimmy Tibbs is a great trainer. But the pundits say that fighters have to go to America to learn the trade properly. Listen, in this gym alone a fighter can get sparring with Joe Calzaghe, Gavin Rees, Bradley Pryce, and Enzo Maccarinelli. Where in the world is there better sparring than that? In Britain and Europe boxing is thriving and we have some very talented fighters, and there are talented trainers here. I'm proud of this.

America needs a wake-up call. I admire American boxing. The recent Antonio Margarito-Miguel Cotto fight was amazing, but a lot of the fights over there have become very subdued. In the promotion department, we are ahead of them now. Could America have got 35,000 people to come out for a fight between Joe Calzaghe and Peter Manfredo? They did less than half of that for Joe against Bernard Hopkins. We have a strong team at the Olympic Games in China and some of them will come out with medals. We have a growing boxing program in the schools and everything is moving in the right direction in this country for our sport.

The Ring: You said that Joe underperformed against Bernard Hopkins. Was this a sign that, at 36 years old, he may be slipping after more than a decade of dominance in the super middleweight division?

EC: Hopkins didn't allow him to perform and it was not one of Joe's best fights, only because of the styles. Hopkins never allows a guy to look good and he doesn't care if the fight is horrible or not. In the circumstances, Joe performed superbly to come back from a first-round knockdown and dominate the second half of the fight, but, as a spectacle, the fight was a disappointment because the other guy didn't come to fight. That's what I meant by "underperformed." The performance was good, but the fight itself was not the kind of performance that Joe wants to put on for his fans.

The Ring: Can we expect a better spectacle against Jones?

EC: I do not like coming up against a guy who has nothing to lose, and Roy Jones has nothing to lose. He was a great fighter in his day, but he has had his day. Maybe he was the fighter of the 1990s, but Joe is the fighter of this millennium. Don't get me wrong, Jones has been a class act and he still is a class act, but he won't beat Joe. ■

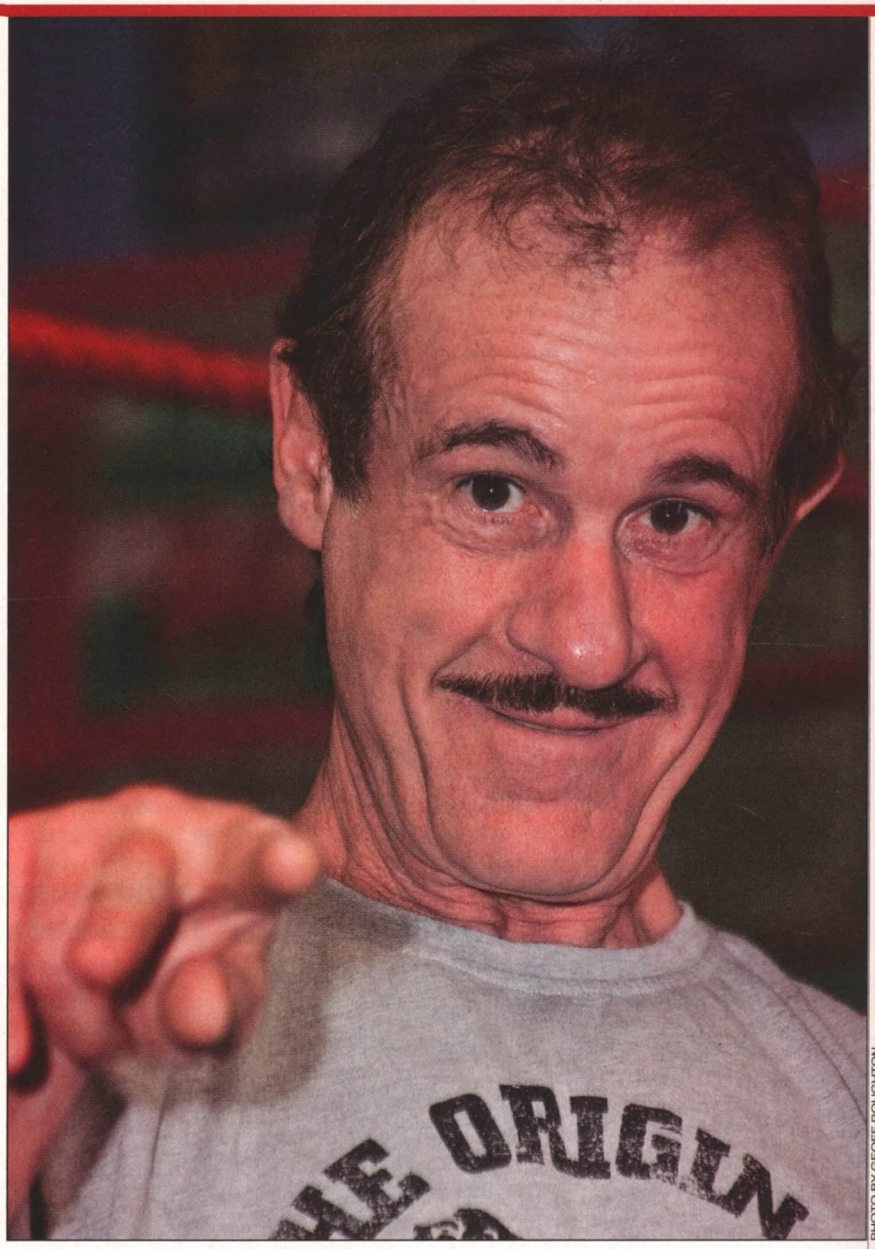

PHOTO BY GEOFF ROUGHTON

"America needs a wake-up call. I admire American boxing. The recent Antonio Margarito-Miguel Cotto fight was amazing, but a lot of the fights over there have become very subdued."

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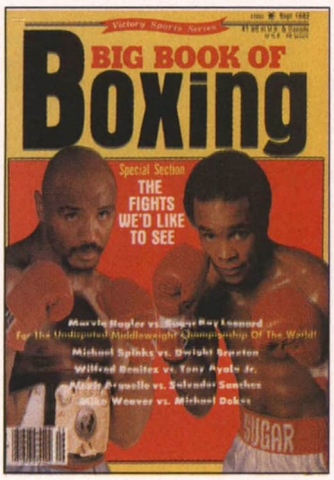

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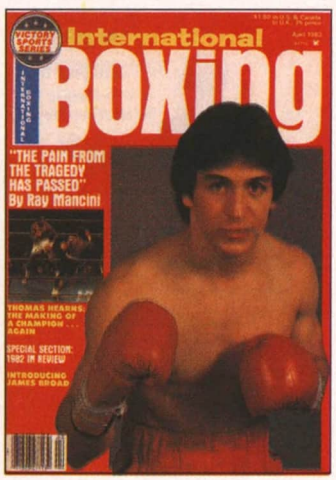

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TARVER vs DAWSON

Odd Couple At The Crossroads

By Don Stewart

They're two African-Americans who come from typical hardscrabble boxing backgrounds. Both are long-armed southpaws. In terms of similarities, that's about it for Antonio Tarver and Chad Dawson.

Tarver is a trash-talking former champ putting the final touches on his career at age 39. He has an Olympic pedigree, an established name, and a page on International Movie Database. The 26-year-old Dawson is a quick up-and-comer looking to break into the mainstream. He's confident, but tends to let his team talk smack on his behalf.

Tarver and Dawson make a light heavyweight odd couple. For all their differences, really, they're the perfect fit for each other at this point in their respective careers.

After two years of campaigning for a shot at one of the division's aging stars, the talented Dawson has landed his biggest fish to date in the form of Tarver. Their long-anticipated October 11 bout on Showtime could be Dawson's gateway to stardom, or at least a path to world champ Joe Calzaghe.

After emerging victorious in separate bouts on the same card in April, light heavyweights Chad Dawson (far right) and Antonio Tarver (right) will finally fight each other, October 11, in a classic crossroads match. Will young stud Dawson continue his rise, or will the 39-year-old Tarver rejuvenate his career.

PHOTOS BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Dawson appeared lucky to get the decision over former world champion Glen Johnson, who shook the younger man on a number of occasions with big right hands such as this. Johnson, who split a pair of bouts with Tarver, has some interesting insights as to which of his former foes will prevail.

Or maybe it will be a needed addition to the legacy of Tarver, who has enjoyed a meaningful career, but one that would figure to fall at least a couple of big wins shy of earning a plaque on the wall in Canastota (see story on page 43).

It's an intriguing matchup in that we don't know exactly what we're going to get.

Former light heavyweight champion Glen Johnson fought wars with both men and deserves (but will probably never get) another crack at either. When pressed for a prediction, the amiable veteran went with Tarver, though he attached a big "if" to that forecast.

"It's hard to say, honestly," Johnson told THE RING. "I'd have to say that the same Tarver that I fought against, if that's who shows up for Dawson, he'll beat Dawson. Tarver, if he's what I saw in his last fight against Clinton Woods, then it's a much closer fight and Dawson will pull it out against him."

Dawson, 26-0 (17) with 1 no-contest, has been tabbed the next dominant 175-pounder since he moved up to the division in 2006. There's no doubt he has the goods, even if he's a bit lacking in charisma outside the ropes. Showtime has also provided Dawson with valuable exposure, pushing him since his days as a ShoBox prospect, though his last three outings have run up against HBO-televised shows the same night.

The opportunity remains for "Bad Chad" to build his name by cleaning out a division full of fading stars. Still, this young gemstone certainly has flaws, flaws that the old guard could conceivably exploit.

Ironically, after all the stumping by Team Dawson and Showtime to make a match with Tarver, it was Dawson's April 12 performance against Johnson that might have finally convinced Tarver, 27-4 (19), to meet the New Haven, Connecticut, native. Many thought the ageless Johnson exposed Dawson as being overhyped, that he chipped away at the youngster's aura of inevitability.

While it's still too early to make that conclusion, Dawson didn't exactly look like Bob Foster incarnate against the 39-year-old "Road Warrior," who came up on the short end of a close decision that could have gone his way. After dominating a disinterested Woods on the same card, Tarver called Dawson "easy pickings," saying that he wouldn't be the same after going through 12 punishing rounds with Johnson.

In an electrifying fight, Dawson carried the early rounds, and then faded late against Johnson's relentless pressure. In the 10th, Johnson hurt Dawson badly with a big right hand reminiscent of the one that nearly decapitated Roy Jones in September 2004, but Dawson stayed upright and

survived. He got the unanimous nod, though it wasn't exactly the coronation many thought it would be.

It's certainly not rare for an up-and-comer to get the call in a close test against an older, more-experienced opponent (see Muhammad Ali-Doug Jones). Johnson was the biggest step-up to date for Dawson, whose previous breakthroughs came against Eric Harding (June 2006) and Tomasz Adamek (February 2007). It could prove to be a valuable learning experience for Dawson, as long as his confidence has remained intact.

But Tarver, who also struggled with Johnson's pressure in their two meetings, is a much different opponent for Dawson. Tarver is at his best competing from the outside, where he can control a fight with his jab. That could very well be to Dawson's advantage.

At 6'3" with a 76½-inch reach, Dawson will have a slight advantage over Tarver, who is 6'2" with a 75-inch reach. Tarver will have to show better footwork and lateral movement if he hopes to outbox Dawson from the outside.

But Dawson seems just too young, quick, and slick to allow that scenario to play out. Really, with Dawson having the edge in the speed and reflexes departments, Tarver trying to outbox Dawson might be as hopeless as running against a conservative in Alabama.

Tarver still has experience, power, and an underrated desire on his side. Perhaps his best bet would be to ditch his comfort zone and try to turn it into a brawl from the opening seconds. Dawson has showed a willingness at times to slug, and his eagerness to impress could cause him to ditch the fight plan and trade with Tarver at close range instead.

Tarver might have to eat some Dawson combos on the inside. But, eventually, he could find a home for a big left, just as he did in his career-defining, one-punch kayo of the quicker, slicker Jones in their May 2004 rematch. Or he could wear down Dawson, much like Johnson did, and look to pull out a decision or a late knockout.

"I don't think Tarver fights that brawling style," said Johnson, who agrees that Tarver must cut off the

PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

In his most recent start, Tarver won an alphabet belt by outpointing a lackluster Clinton Woods over 12 rounds. Tarver didn't have to be at his very best to outclass the Englishman, but will have to up his game considerably to beat Dawson.

PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE

Dawson captured an alphabet strap in March 2007 with an upset decision over Tomasz Adamek. It remains one of his most significant victories, but the fact that "Bad Chad" had to come off the floor to win should not be overlooked.

ring and make Dawson fight. "You have two guys in there trying to box. Dawson is the faster guy with the better movement. Tarver is not fast at all. Tarver is more like a plodder. Dawson is faster."

Whatever Tarver does, he'll have to make sure his hands are as active as his mouth. He's at his best when he's at his busiest.

Bernard Hopkins dominated Tarver by neutralizing his jab, and just about everything else, in lifting the world title from him in June 2006. Tarver averaged just 19 jabs and 36 punches per round that night, according to CompuBox. He averaged more than 70 shots in each of the two fights with the relentless Johnson. In the third fight against Jones, Tarver won by throwing 52 punches per round, as opposed to 47 when he lost their first meeting.

"If he can step up and fight at the same level that we fought at," Johnson emphasized, "he'll beat Dawson."

Cruising through rounds cost Tarver his first fights with Jones and Johnson. It's a mistake he can't afford to repeat. In other words, Tarver will have to be in peak shape. Considering that he began training for Dawson in mid-May, that shouldn't be an issue.

It's a bit simpler for Dawson, who started camp August 10 with trainer Eddie Mustafa Muhammad. Dawson needs to find his range and focus on outboxing Tarver while avoiding the temptation to slug. He has the speed and technique to overwhelm his aging opponent, smother his offense, and neutralize the jab. When Tarver plants his feet to launch his powershots, Dawson can beat him to the punch with crisp counters.

"Dawson is not a fighter, he's more trained to be a boxer," Johnson said. "He'll have to box Tarver and make Tarver look slower than he is, somewhat similar to what Bernard Hopkins did. Move around, make Tarver move his feet."

Also key for Dawson will be dictating the tempo to avoid a late-round lapse, as well as avoiding the older man's tricks, such as the counter uppercut off the ropes. The X-factor, though, is Dawson's chin.

Harding dropped Dawson with a right hand in '06. Adamek landed a right to the jaw that put him down, and nearly out, in the 10th round last year. Johnson also landed a few big rights upstairs that visibly shook him. So if Dawson opts to slug with Tarver, his potential breakthrough night could end in heartbreak.

However, Johnson pointed out that Dawson appears to have the edge in all-southpaw showdowns.

Despite a flash knockdown in the first, he did just fine in comfortably outpointing an over-the-hill Harding. In 2005, Dawson stopped Ian Gardner in 11, the same Ian Gardner that gave Arthur Abraham a scare earlier that year. For what it's worth, Dawson also posted an easy stoppage of a washed-up Carl Daniels in 2004.

Tarver, on the other hand, eked out a split decision against a past-his-prime Reggie Johnson in 2002. A peaking Harding decisioned him two years before that. In the rematch, Harding was outboxing Tarver before "The Magic Man" conjured up a fourth-round knockdown that led to a fifth-round stoppage.

Tarver deserves some credit for finally backing up his non-stop talk by agreeing to face the dangerous Dawson. Showtime first tried to make this fight a year ago, but Tarver avoided it, opting instead to chase Jeff Lacy. That one fell apart, and Tarver failed to get big bouts with Calzaghe, Jones, or Hopkins, even after outpointing Woods for a belt.

Like his character in *Rocky Balboa*, Tarver seemed to be out of options.

Meanwhile, this was a matchup Dawson and his team dearly coveted. When faced with the option of defending the WBC belt in Romania against Adrian Diaconu or vacating to take the bigger fight with Tarver, they did the right thing and gave the sanctioning body the finger, and the boxing public the bout it wanted.

Dawson's outspoken manager, Mike Criscio, has griped for the past couple of years, and rightfully so at times, that the division's vets wouldn't give the newcomer a chance. He shouldn't be complaining now, not after getting the April date with Johnson, and now the October showdown with Tarver. "I'm glad he's going to finally fight Chad," Criscio said.

"I've been after him for two years now. He finally stepped up to the plate. I think he had no choice."

When it came down to it, Tarver and Dawson needed each other. ■

Don Stewart covers boxing for the Reading (Pennsylvania) Eagle and is a regular contributor to THE RING.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Having a feature role in Sylvester Stallone's* Rocky Balboa *helped Tarver gain mainstream attention, but you have to wonder how much his Hollywood experience and the accompanying hoopla contributed to Tarver losing the light heavyweight championship to Bernard Hopkins.

JONES vs. CALZAGHE

The Finale For Either, Neither ... Or Both?

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY TIMOTHY A. CLARY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

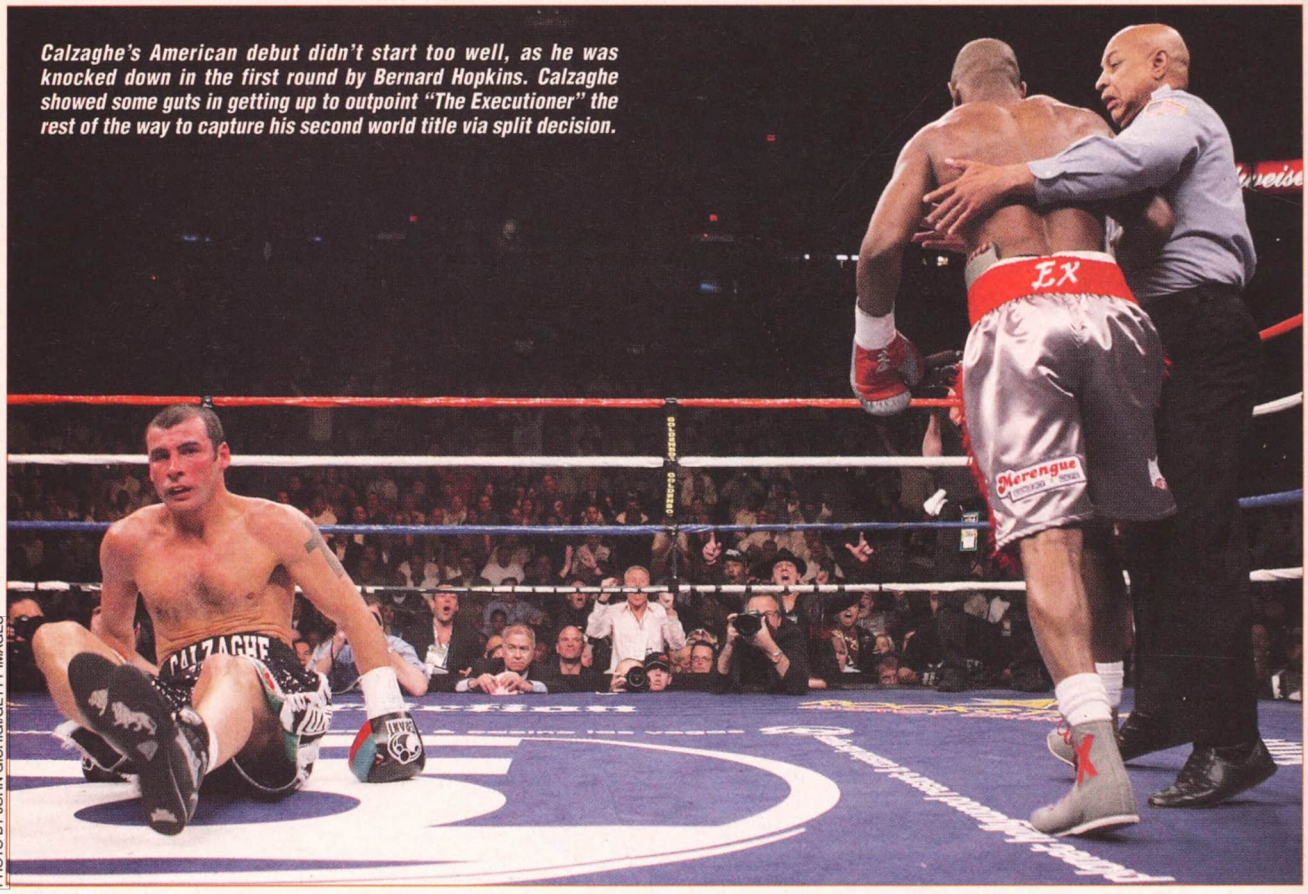
By Brian Doogan

Having engaged in a program of fights over a number of years that Hugh McIlvanney, the doyen of British sportswriting, described as "strangely conservative [for it] obscured historic talent," Joe Calzaghe has etched into his résumé a comparatively epic endgame.

In two 2007 fights at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff, Wales, he drew a combined total of 85,000 people. Predictably, the hugely likeable but, in equal measure, limited Peter Manfredo was no contender at all for the world super middleweight champion. But in his second bout in '07, Calzaghe delivered a virtuoso victory on points over previously unbeaten Mikkel Kessler, who held the WBA and WBC 168-pounds titles, in his next bout. It was perhaps the greatest triumph of Calzaghe's career, earning him recognition as Britain's Sports Personality of the Year, though an impressive body of work through 14 years in the ring and 44 unbeaten fights contributed too.

Then in April 2008, he won his second world title when he outpointed light heavyweight champion Bernard Hopkins in Las Vegas. The real significance of his win, which Calzaghe claimed by climbing off the floor after suffering a first-round knockdown and by driving the fight through the majority of rounds thereafter, was that he demonstrated diamond-hard nerve in the face of adversity, prevailed in his first appearance on American soil and captured his second RING Magazine belt.

It is this belt that Calzaghe will put on the line, November 8, at Madison Square Garden against Roy Jones, deemed by the Boxing Writers' Association of America to be the best boxer of the 1990s. At 39, however, Jones is a long way



Calzaghe's American debut didn't start too well, as he was knocked down in the first round by Bernard Hopkins. Calzaghe showed some guts in getting up to outpoint "The Executioner" the rest of the way to capture his second world title via split decision.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

removed from his peak. If this is to be Calzaghe's farewell fight, as he has declared, it is a suitable setting and, for his star power at least, a suitable opponent.

Hopkins was unable to locate a single light heavyweight contender against whom he could defend his belt in an uninspiring two-year title reign—Winky Wright had boxed only fleetingly at middleweight, having spent almost the entirety of his career at light middleweight. Calzaghe was a super middleweight moving up for the first time—and the list of potential contenders has not changed much. There is no way that HBO would have considered Calzaghe-Chad Dawson or Calzaghe-Glen Johnson for a pay-per-view event that will receive its Emmy award-winning *24/7* treatment, replacing the large gap in its scheduling which was created by Floyd Mayweather's withdrawal from the negotiating table with Oscar De La Hoya.

Calzaghe-Jones may not fit the bill in every respect but, as a plausible alternative pay-per-view seller for HBO, it does. Jones went some way towards repairing a reputation torn to shreds when he suffered back-to-back knockout defeats by Antonio Tarver and Glen Johnson in 2004 by beating a shell of a fighter in Felix Trinidad over 12 rounds in January at Madison Square Garden. Significantly, this contest generated more than 500,000 pay-per-view buys and $25-million in television revenue in the United States, figures which suggest that Jones' name still holds a certain cachet at the box office.

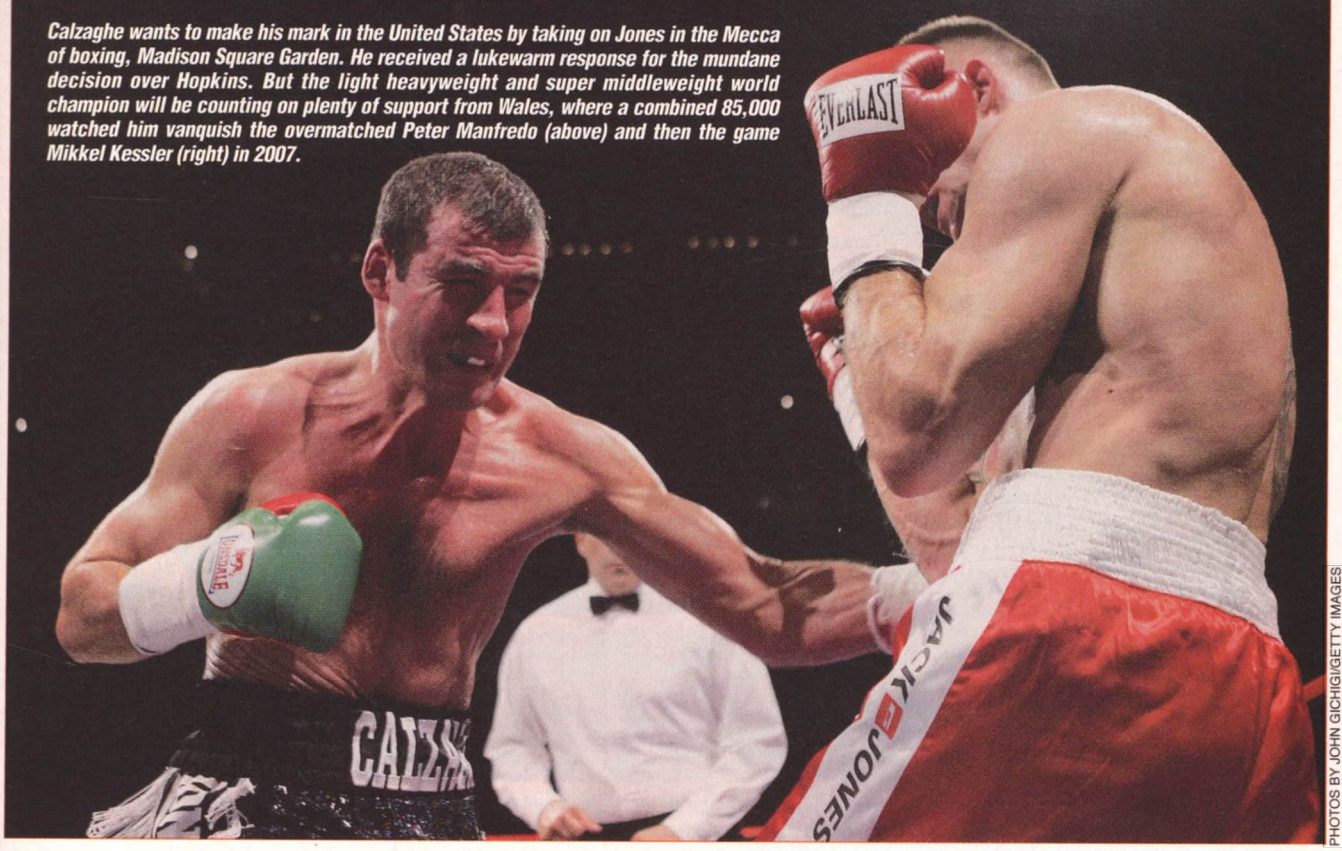
For this reason, the bout had to take place in the United States. Calzaghe would prefer for his final fight to be staged in front of his British supporters, but because of the formidable logistical problems it would involve, HBO has never staged a pay-per-view event overseas. Calzaghe may still get his wish, of course, for he retains his status as world super middleweight champion and the door to a lucrative bout against middleweight champion Kelly Pavlik is still ajar. In spite of what he says now or, ultimately, how he may feel, the question of his future inside a boxing ring will only be addressed conclusively when Jones is out of the way.

"I believe this will be my last fight and I feel it in my heart. It feels right and I've made a decision not to box beyond 2008," Calzaghe told THE RING in the second week of July. "Ask me again when the fight is over and I'll tell you then how I feel."

Several weeks earlier in his column for the *South Wales Argus*, Calzaghe explained his position.

"I've got to say I love watching the kid [Pavlik] fight," he wrote. "He's entirely forward thinking. Retreating and holding just don't come into his mind. Pavlik is a breath of fresh air in American boxing. They badly need a guy like him and I think he's got a big future. I am not sure if Pavlik really wants to face me at the moment. He would have little to gain because I believe I would definitely beat him. With all due respect to Gary Lockett [Calzaghe's stablemate, whom Pavlik stopped in three rounds on June 7 in Atlantic City], I would be a step-up too far for Pavlik. He's got the world

Calzaghe wants to make his mark in the United States by taking on Jones in the Mecca of boxing, Madison Square Garden. He received a lukewarm response for the mundane decision over Hopkins. But the light heavyweight and super middleweight world champion will be counting on plenty of support from Wales, where a combined 85,000 watched him vanquish the overmatched Peter Manfredo (above) and then the game Mikkel Kessler (right) in 2007.



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at his feet at middleweight or super middleweight and will want to build his unbeaten record, rather than stepping up at least one weight category to face me. It's not beyond the realms of possibility that we will face each other, but I think Jones is the right fight for me at the moment."

Whether it will be competitive or not depends largely on Jones, though Calzaghe will be 37 on his next birthday and, despite being almost universally regarded as the second best boxer pound-for-pound in the world behind Manny Pacquiao, he may not be at the peak of his powers.

"Joe is a fantastic fighter, who has done great things, but his time is almost done now," said Nicky Piper, an analyst for British Sky Broadcasting who lost a WBC title bout at super middleweight against Nigel Benn in 1992. "I think it's the mental side of things that is more of an issue with Joe. I think his hunger is leaving him and when that happens it never comes back. He is talking about one more fight, but I would question whether he still has the ambition to perform at his best. I wonder how Joe feels about the game at the moment. How many bullets does he have left to fire?"

Calzaghe's split from longtime promoter Frank Warren remained the subject of litigation when this issue went to press, so the emotional impact on Calzaghe was difficult to gauge. On the surface, he appeared to be happy about having entered into a promotional partnership with Jones' Square Ring Inc, whose CEO, John Wirt, negotiated much of the deal with HBO and Madison Square Garden. But it is new territory for a man whose focus for the past 15 years has been purely on fighting.

Piper's assessment is interesting in the light of a performance against Hopkins that was a long way short of Calzaghe's best, but who has ever looked good against "The Executioner?" Furthermore, Calzaghe has performed erratically throughout his career and, significantly, he has always found a way to win.

And what of Jones, who has no need to enlist in another war, so why is he doing it? A payday possibly worth as much as $20-million beckons, but he has earned an estimated $130-million already in his 19-year professional career. Money cannot be his only motivation. The former four-weight titleholder is solvent enough to fund his own record label, he cruises around his hometown of Pensacola, Florida, in his Bentley or in the back of a pimped-out limousine, and, if he wants to play a game of basketball out of town, he will charter a jet, as he used to do regularly when he played for the semi-pro Lakeland Blue Ducks in the United

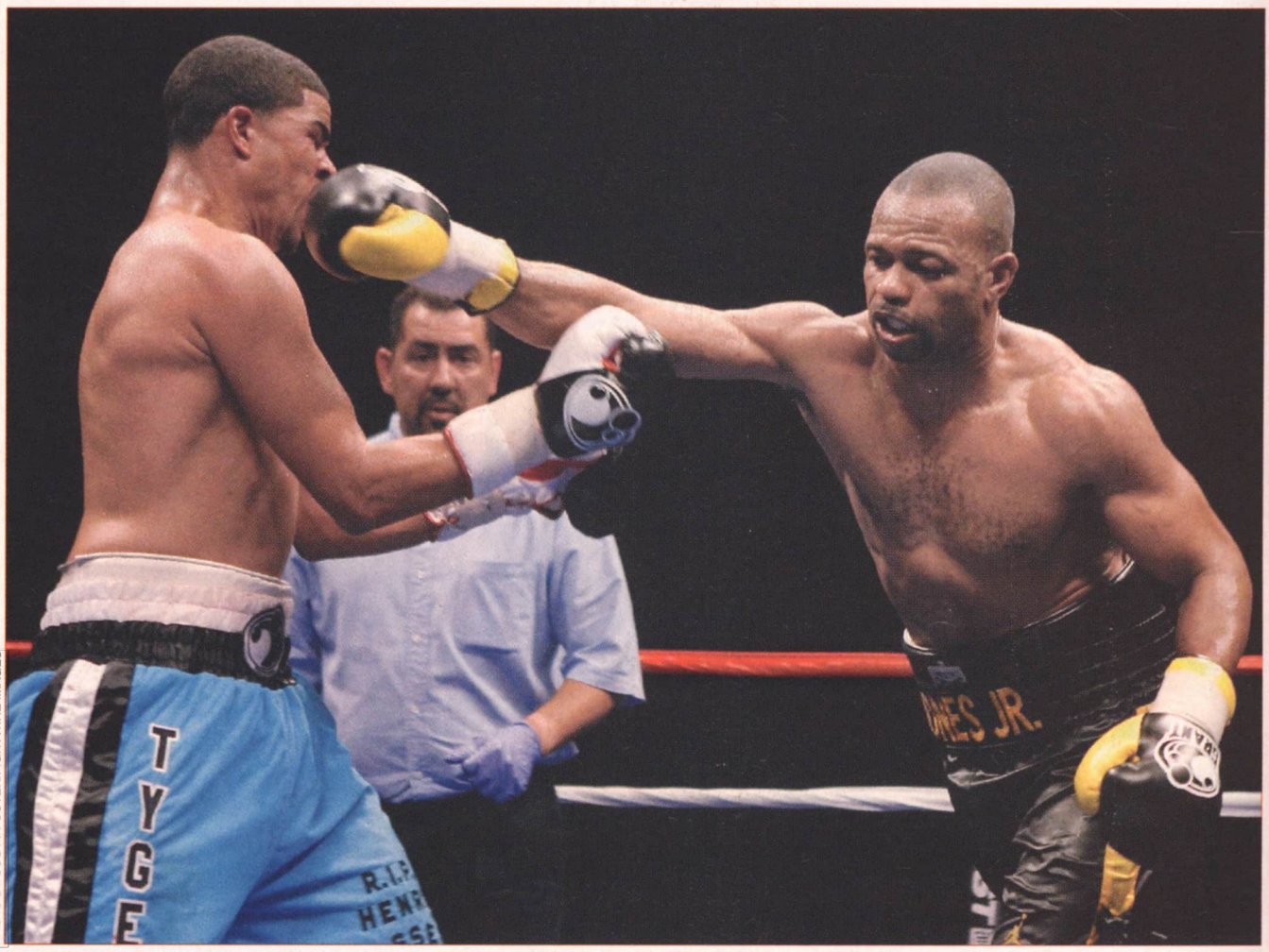

PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Jones found some redemption in dominating the previously undefeated Anthony Hanshaw. Jones exhibited flashes of what once made him one of the best fighters in the world, especially when he unleashed two rights that knocked down Hanshaw in the 11th.

States Basketball League (USBL).

When he played for 15 minutes in a game for the Jacksonville Barracudas once, scoring six points before he stopped Canadian opponent Eric Lucas in the 12th round that night in an IBF super middleweight title defense, it fuelled the feeling that his love for fist fighting was ephemeral. Maybe he was not in love with boxing at all. Yet, having suffered three defeats in his past six bouts, here he is preparing to challenge an unbeaten two-weight world champion. Can he be competitive?

"Roy Jones is a real legend, the best boxer of the 1990s, a guy who doesn't need to tell himself that he's a legend when he gets up in the morning, and that's the difference between him and Hopkins," said Calzaghe. "I have a lot more respect for Jones than I do for Hopkins, and the fight will be a lot more aesthetically pleasing, I think. Jones was brilliant in the 1990s, a fighter I truly loved to watch. He had those bad knockout defeats after coming back down from heavyweight, but his performance against Trinidad convinced me that he is still a force to be reckoned with. I believe I will win the fight, of course, but I won't be complacent this time, as I was when I fought Hopkins, a man I have no respect for at all."

PHOTO BY TIMOTHY A. CLARY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Beating a shop-worn Felix Trinidad helped set up the Calzaghe fight for Jones. While "Tito" may have been the major attraction in the strong pay-per-view numbers the fight received, Jones will be counted on to carry the U.S. PPV load against Calzaghe.

Jones was already a light heavyweight titleholder before Calzaghe won his first belt at super middleweight and, by his own admission; he was looking in a different direction even though he saw the Welshman as a potential opponent a long time ago.

"Boxing is a business, so when I was the best pound-for-pound boxer in the world it wouldn't have been smart for me to go and fight Joe," Jones reflected. "You don't go to somebody else when you're the best, they must come to you, so I wouldn't take the risk and why would I? Why would I meet that challenge when I'm already the best? Why would I go to your country and give you a chance to allow the powers-that-be to take a close decision and give it to you? Now that we have reached this point in our careers I was willing to go to Wales to make this event happen, but I'm happy still and proud to be fighting Joe at Madison Square Garden."

Calzaghe should win. Certainly, he has more to lose: his unbeaten record in 45 fights, THE RING light heavyweight title, and the opportunity to solidify his decision about his future in a clear-headed way late in November.

No matter about belts, the spoils of war after a long and exceptional career will be on the line when Britain's boxer of the millennium encounters one of the Garden's ghosts—and perhaps bows out as one himself. ■

Brian Doogan is THE RING's European correspondent.

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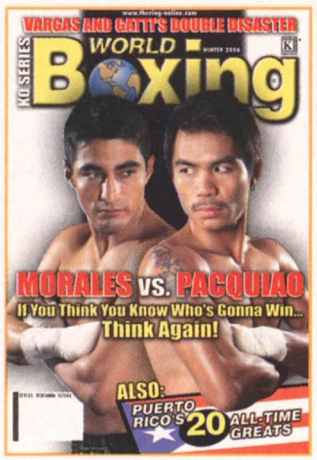

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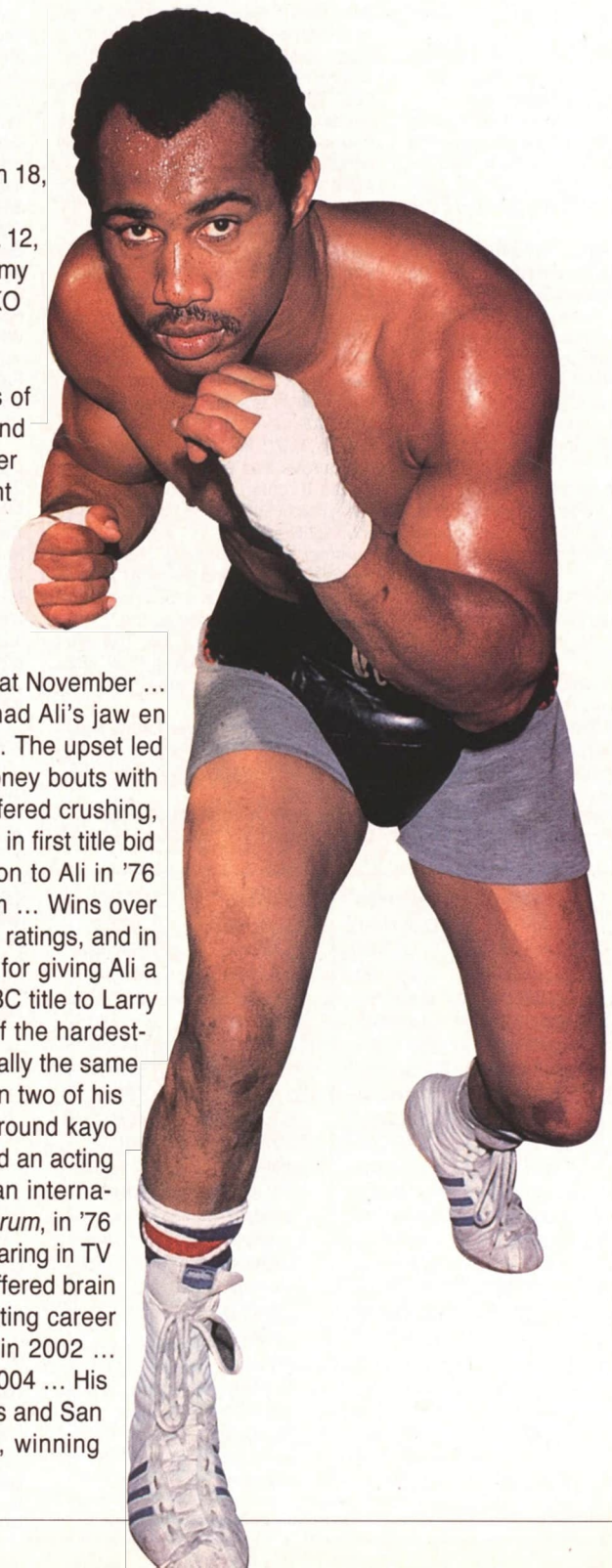
Hall of Fame Profile

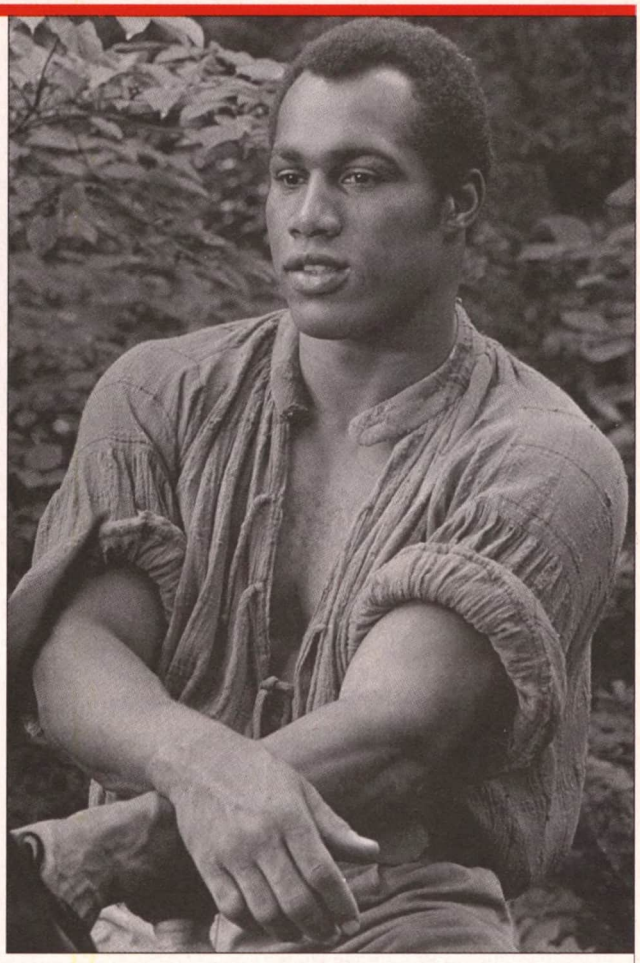
THE RING features a thumbnail biography of a ring great who has received the ultimate honor: induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York

Ken Norton

Birthdate: August 9, 1943
Birthplace: Jacksonville, Illinois
Weight Class: Heavyweight
Height: 6'3"
Professional Record: 42-7-1 (33)
Professional Title: WBC Heavyweight (March 18, 1978-June 8, 1978)
Best Performances: Muhammad Ali (W 12, L 12, L 15), Jerry Quarry (KO 5), Duane Bobick (KO 1), Jimmy Young (W 15), Larry Holmes (L 15), Ron Stander (KO 5), Tex Cobb (W 10), Perdo Lovell (KO 5)
Year Of IBHOF Induction: 1992
Background: One of the most popular fighters of the 1970s, whose aggressive style, good looks, and Adonis-like physique helped him become a crossover star during what is widely considered a heavyweight golden era ... A track and field standout in high school, he attended Northern Mississippi State University on a football scholarship before joining the Marine Corps in 1963, where he took up boxing ... Three-time All-Marine heavyweight champion before reentering civilian life in '67 and turning pro that November ... Rocketed to instant fame when he broke Muhammad Ali's jaw en route to winning a 12-round decision in March '73 ... The upset led to second and third fights with Ali, as well as big-money bouts with virtually every major heavyweight of the time ... Suffered crushing, second-round kayo defeat to George Foreman in '74 in first title bid ... Considered unlucky to lose controversial decision to Ali in '76 rubber match, the final fight held at Yankee Stadium ... Wins over Duane Bobick and Jimmy Young kept him high in the ratings, and in '78 the WBC stripped world champion Leon Spinks for giving Ali a rematch, and awarded the belt to Norton ... Lost WBC title to Larry Holmes on June 9, 1978, via split decision in one of the hardest-fought heavyweight title fights of all-time ... Never really the same fighter after the Holmes war, and was knocked out in two of his next five fights, retiring after suffering a vicious first-round kayo at the hands of Gerry Cooney in May '81 ... Launched an acting career in 1975, playing the title role in *Mandingo*, an international, box-office hit that was followed by a sequel, *Drum*, in '76 ... Continued to act after hanging up his gloves, appearing in TV shows such as *The A-Team* and *Knight Rider*, but suffered brain damage in an '86 auto accident that curtailed his acting career ... Published autobiography, *Going The Distance*, in 2002 ... Elected to the Marine Corps Sports Hall of Fame in 2004 ... His son, Ken Jr., was a linebacker for the Dallas Cowboys and San Francisco 49ers, and played in three consecutive, winning Super Bowls.

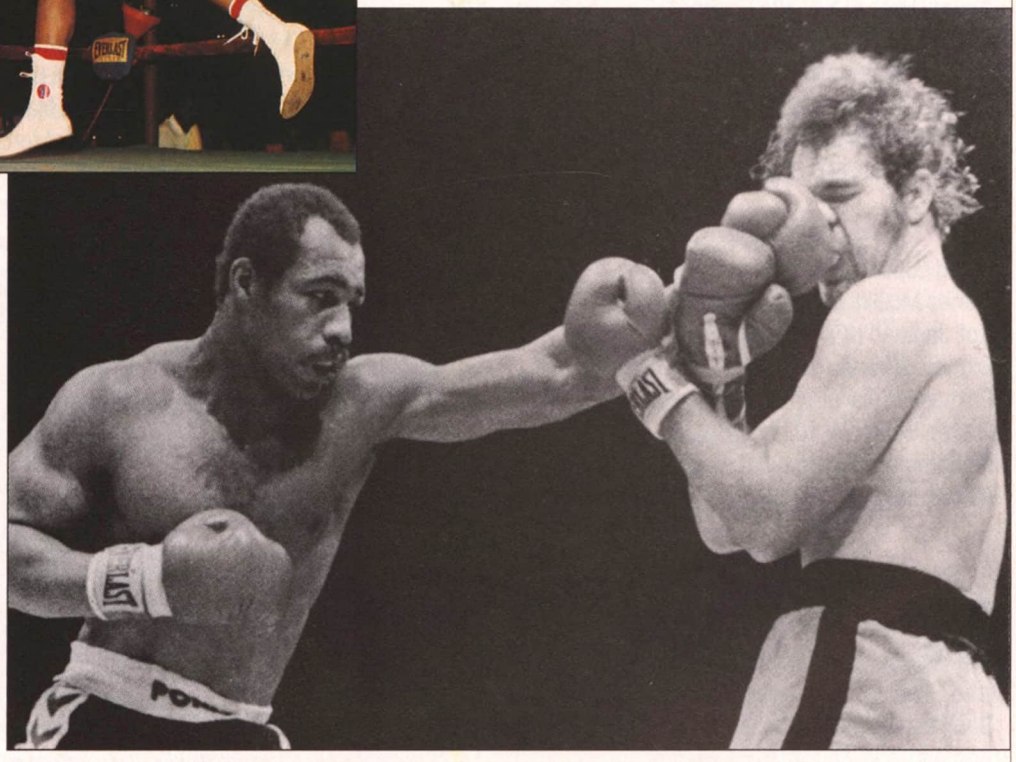


Norton shares a laugh with former light heavyweight champion Bob Foster during a visit to the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1995, where Norton had been inducted three years earlier.



Norton as he appeared as the fighting slave Mandingo, *a movie Paramount released in 1975 to popular acclaim and critical disdain.*

Norton chases Ali during their second fight, which resulted in a split-decision victory for Ali. A reasonable argument can be made that Norton deserved the decision in all three Ali bouts.



Tex Cobb takes a left to the face during his 1980 loss to Norton in San Antonio, Texas. It was Norton's final victory.

[Summary]

Heavyweights
Damian Wills KO 3 Greg McGhee
Vinny Maddalone KO 1 Joe Stofle
Zuri Lawrence W 8 Albert Sosnowski
Derric Rossy W 8 Jermell Barnes
Gonzalo Basile KO 4 Ademar Correa
John Napari KO 3 Ray Acquaye
Nenad Borovcanin KO 2 Gyorgy Mihalik
Chauncy Welliver W Disq. 2 Daniel Tai
Seth Mitchell KO 2 Ryan St. Germain

Cruiserweights
Ola Afolabi W 8 Deleon Tinsley

Light Heavyweights
Jeff Lacy W 10 Epifanio Mendoza
Tavoris Cloud KO 10 Julio Gonzalez
Beibut Shumenov W 12 Montell Griffin
Joey Vegas KO 7 J.J. Ojuederie
Chuck Mussachio W 8 Richard Stewart
Tarvis Simms W 6 Carl Daniels
Daniel Bruwer KO 6 Ronnie Lategan
Fulgencio Zuniga KO 2 Elias Ruiz

Super Middleweights
Anthony Mundine W 10 Crazy Kim
Andre Dirrell KO 4 Mike Paschall
Stjepan Bozic W 12 Roman Aramian
Dionisio Miranda W 10 Sebastian Demers
Adonis Stevenson KO 1 Anthony Bonsante
Piotr Wilczewski KO 7 Sergey Kharchenko
Tarvis Simms W 6 Carl Daniels

Middleweights
David Lopez KO 5 Billy Lyell
James McGirt Jr.W 10 Ryamond Joval
Kofi Jantuah KO 4 Ricardo Genero
Dionisio Miranda W 10 Sebastien Demers
Faimasasa Tavui W 10 Zulfikar Ali
Darren Barker W 10 Larry Sharpe
Mohammed Akrong KO 9 Karama Nyilawila
Daniel Jacobs KO 1 Sergio Rios

Junior Middleweights
Joel Julio KO 6 Jose Varela
Antonio Diaz W 12 Felix Flores
Joe Greene W 12 Jose Torres
Ishe Smith W 10 Pawel Wolak
Saul Alvarez W 10 Carlos Jerez
Ade Alfons W 10 Bambang Rusadi
Ishmail Arvin KO 6 Anthony Thompson
Sherzod Husanov KO 3 Sintung Kietbusaba
Tursunbay Ablyakimov KO 3 Valikh Aliev
Stefano Castellucci KO 1 Tobia Loriga

Welterweights
Antonio Margarito KO 11 Miguel Cotto
(*Wins WBA Title*)
Joshua Clottey Tech. Win 9 Zab Judah
(*Wins Vacant IBF Title*)
Randall Bailey KO 1 Dairo Esalas
Sebastian Lujan W 10 Jose Luis Castillo
Darsim Nanggala W 10 Dedi Kirauhe
Mike Alvarado KO 4 Cesar Bazan
Jesus Soto Karass KO 8 David Estrada
Mark Chang KO 6 Shawn Simmons
Cosme Rivera KO 3 Bobby Joe Valdez
Ikbal Kurbanov KO 3 Urmat Riskeldiev
Victor Corvalan KO 9 Walter Acuna
Chris Van Heerden KO 8 Hassan Saku
Kenny Galarza KO 2 Devarise Crayton

Junior Welterweights
Alex De Jesus KO 12 Adrian Navarette
Carlos Hernandez W 10 Hector Alatorre
Ashley Theophane W 8 DeMarcus Corley
Ionut Dan Ion W 12 Peter Semo
Ali Oubaali KO 8 Christopher Fernandez
Albert Mensah KO 6 Dragon Kidega
Kaiser Mabuza KO 3 Jason Naule
Omar Chavez KO 1 Jeremy Marts

Lightweights
Jose Santa Cruz KO 5 Miguel Munguia

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Heavyweight Zuri Lawrence nails Albert Sosnowski in the face with a left

Anthony Peterson W 10 Javier Jauregui
Patrick Malinga KO 12 Amon Baloyi
Jorge Teron KO 6 Michael Lozada
Reyes Sanchez KO 6 Francisco Huerta
Leonardo Zappavigna W 10 Leon Maratas
Jorge Pimentel KO 2 Antonio Valencia
Bobby Pacquiao KO 8 Decho Bankluaygym
Jason Crowe KO 7 Jurland Ceniza
Sam Amoako KO 6 Peter Musa
Fidel Munoz KO 6 Oscar Garcia
Bekzod Nabiev KO 6 Mahsud Jumaev
Jae-Hwan Kim KO 5 Dong-Hwa Park
David Rodela KO 3 Arnel Porras
Ann Saccurato W 10 Fujin Raika

Junior Lightweights

Jasper Seroka W 12 Gabriel Phakula
Jose Perea W 12 Arturo Gomez
Satoshi Hosono KO 9 La Amir Laila
Alejandro Sanabria KO 8 Abraham Rodriguez
Carlos Velasquez KO 2 David Vasquez
Roberto Arrieta KO 3 Luis Rojas
Francisco Valdez KO 3 Floro Carranza
Rene Gonzalez KO 2 Alberto de Jesus Trinidad
Carlos Lopez KO 1 Jose Rodriguez

Featherweights

Jhonny Gonzalez KO 1 Leivi Brea
Oscar Larios KO 7 Marlon Aguilar
Vyacheslav Gusev W 12 Chaiyong Sithsaithong
Masaki Miya W 10 Kumarnthong Por Pluemkamol
Miguel Garcia KO 8 Jose Hernandez
Juan Velasquez KO 2 Edison Morillo
Bernabe Concepcion KO 3 Adam Carrera
Terdsak Jandaeng Tech. Draw 4 Eric Conoy
Jonathan Barros KO 1 Cristian Lopez
Juan Burgos W 8 Felix Flores

Junior Featherweights

Isaac Nettey W 12 Galley Cudjoe
Teon Kennedy KO 2 Thomas Snow
Elvis Mejia KO 4 Ernesto Ramirez
Jesus Rojas KO 3 Anyetei Laryea
Oscar Gonzales KO 2 Michael Carrera
Kiko Martinez KO 1 Iordan Vasilev

Bantamweights

Rolly Lunas W 12 Kaona Klongpajol
Rodrigo Guerreo W 12 Juan Rosas
Thangthong Kiattaweesuk W 12 Jonel Alivio
Francisco Rodriguez W 10 Alex Becerra
Tenkai Tsunami W 10 Eun-Young Kim
Fahpetchnoi Sor Chitpattana Tech. Win 7 Hyok Jun Kim
Simpiwe Vetyeka KO 8 Nkosinathi Tshinavhe
Julio Miranda KO 6 Julio Grimaldo
Michael Domingo KO 2 Rivo Rengkung

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Junior welterweight Ali Oubaali unleashes a right uppercut on Christopher Fernandez

Junior Bantamweights

Vic Darchinyan KO 5 Dimitri Kirilov
(*Wins IBF Title*)
Rafael Concepcion KO 10 A.J. Banal
(*Wins Vacant WBA Title*)
Raul Martinez W 12 Isidro Garcia
Takahisa Masuda W 10 Wandee Singwancha
Noriyuki Komatsu W 10 Rosendo Vega
Jose Lopez KO 7 Oscar Andrade
Lesley Sekotswe KO 7 Simon Ramoni
Everardo Morales Tech. Win 3 Oswaldo Rodriguez
Duangpetch Saengmorakot KO 3 Eric Siregar
Ernie Marquez W 6 Yan Barthelemy

Flyweights

Daisuke Naito KO 10 Tomonobu Shimizu
(*Retains WBC Title*)
Takefumi Sakata W 12 Hiroyuki Hisataka
(*Retains WBA Title*)
Ronald Ramos W 10 Alfonso De La Hoz
Toshiyuki Igarashi W 10 Tomoya Kaneshiro
Carlos Rueda KO 8 Juan Hernandez
Takuya Yamada KO 7 Tomoyoshi Nakayamasuper
Cesar Seda Jr. KO 6 Jose Bernal
Masafumi Okubo Tech. Draw 3 Yasuto Aritomi

Junior Flyweights

Rodel Mayol Tech. Win 7 Ardin Diale
Cesar Canchila W 12 Giovanni Segura
Milan Melindo W 12 Carlos Melo
Kosuke Takeichi Tech. Draw 10 Job Solano
Kompayak Porpramook KO 6 Marti Polii

Strawweights

Juan Palacios KO 10 Omar Soto
Julio Felix W 10 Milton Marin
Edren Dapudong W 10 Michael Rodriguez
Momo Koseki KO 2 Winyu Paradorn Gym
Sofyan Efendi KO 1 Numchai Taksinisan

Wladimir Klitschko KO II Tony Thompson

Hamburg, Germany: If champions are like volcanoes that erupt every so often, as former world heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis suggested recently, it is surely just a matter of time before Klitschko, 241, Kiev, Ukraine, transforms himself into Mount Vesuvius. Or perhaps not. The world's premier heavyweight has the appearance and physical attributes to be the real deal, but he is dominant in an era of forgettable fights. His 11th-round knockout of the 36-year-old Thompson, 247½, Washington, D.C., in front of a capacity crowd at the Color Line Arena was the latest uninspiring installment.

Sure, Klitschko, 51-3 (45), produced a thunderous climax with a hard right hand to Thompson's jaw, the kind of destruction that can make heroes out of the big men. But the drama of heavyweight boxing has evolved into parody and the audience is no longer fooled. Klitschko-Thompson did a 1.4 rating on HBO when the bout was broadcast live in the afternoon and a 1.9 rating when replayed at night, the lowest ratings of Klitschko's career on HBO and the first time that viewing figures for an HBO *World Championship Boxing* production have come in at less than a 2.0. Thompson secured a shot at Klitschko's WBO and IBF titles by staying unbeaten for eight years, but his list of victims during this period included some who would have had plenty to handle in a Saturday night quarrel in their local pub.

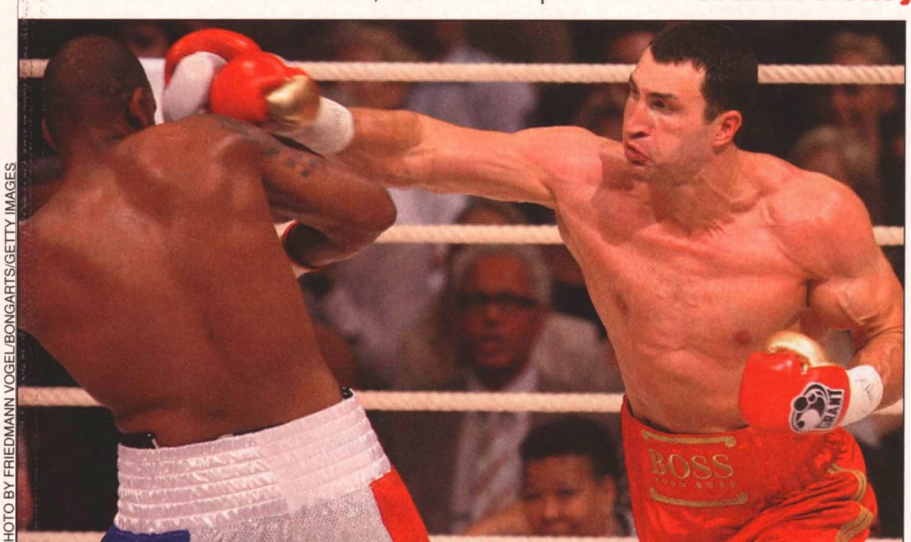
But Klitschko did not have it all his own way, which had less to do with Thompson's abilities than with the 32-year-old titleholder's own anxieties. Since being knocked out by Corrie Sanders in two rounds in 2003 and by Lamon Brewster at the end of the fifth round in 2004, Klitschko has been a prisoner of his demons. He should blast away the likes of Thompson with little fuss, but he does not. The American's ambition was limited, but when he opened a cut above Klitschko's right eye late in the second round—a clash of heads also leaving Thompson bleeding—the effect on Klitschko was that his ambition was diminished significantly. His work became disheveled and Thompson might have had the opportunity to inflict more damage, had he the inclination.

By the seventh round, however, it was apparent that Klitschko's jabs and occasional straight rights were enough to quell any enthusiasm that Thompson might have been capable of summoning. There were few exciting exchanges, but the fight was not the ugly, passionless encounter that so exasperated witnesses to Klitschko's tedious performance against Russia's Sultan Ibragimov in February at Madison Square Garden.

Ultimately, the Ukrainian got the job done inside the distance, American referee Joe Cortez counting out Thompson, 31-2 (19), at 1:38 of round 11. "This man was unbelievably determined," said Klitschko, stating an opinion not everyone agreed with.

Klitschko's next challenger could be Alexander Povetkin in the fall, but Povetkin's promoter, Wilfried Sauerland, has a deal with a rival German TV network and this might jeopardize the plan. Klitschko also expressed an interest in fighting Nicolay Valuev, who was scheduled to meet John Ruiz for the vacant WBA title on August 30. "This fight is interesting because I have never fought a guy who is seven feet tall," Klitschko explained. Whether even this would generate interest in heavyweight boxing around the world is debatable.

Promoter: **K2 Promotions**
(7-12-08)
Brian Doogan



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Klitschko tops Thompson in another highly forgettable bout

Joshua Clottey Tech. Win 9 Zab Judah

Las Vegas, Nevada: In 2004, Judah, 143, Brooklyn, New York, confronted Clottey, 147, Bronx, New York, at Gleason's Gym in response to Clottey calling out Judah following a televised win. Four years later, the two finally fought, but a premature end to their bout at Palms Casino didn't bring a tidy conclusion to their rivalry.

The Ghana-born Clottey did do enough to edge a motivated Judah for a win that earned him the vacant IBF belt and some significant ground in the deep 147-pound division. As of press time, Top Rank appeared ready to match him with WBA beltholder Antonio Margarito in a November rematch of their 2006 fight that saw Clottey injure

both of his hands in losing a close decision.

Clottey, 31, promised to bust up the 30-year-old Judah, and he did just that with his relentless pressure. Judah suffered a broken nose in the fourth round, and in the ninth a Clottey uppercut opened up a large gash above the former champ's left eye. The bout was stopped at the 1:22 mark after ringside physician Dr. James Game declared that Judah couldn't see.

The cut was ruled to have been opened by an accidental headbutt, however, so the fight went to the scorecards (even though replays suggested it was the uppercut that did it). All three American judges had Clottey ahead, with Glenn Trowbridge and George Hill scoring it 86-85, and Duane Ford seeing it 87-84. THE RING also had it 87-84, Clottey.

The quick-fisted Judah, 36-6 (25), started fast and gave Clottey, 35-2 (20), some problems early, especially in the center of the ring. But he was unable to hurt the taller Clottey, who never stopped moving forward.

Clottey began taking control in the third round, when he landed several hard rights to the head and body, as Judah began to slow. Clottey staggered Judah early in the fourth with another right hand. Between rounds, Judah bled from a

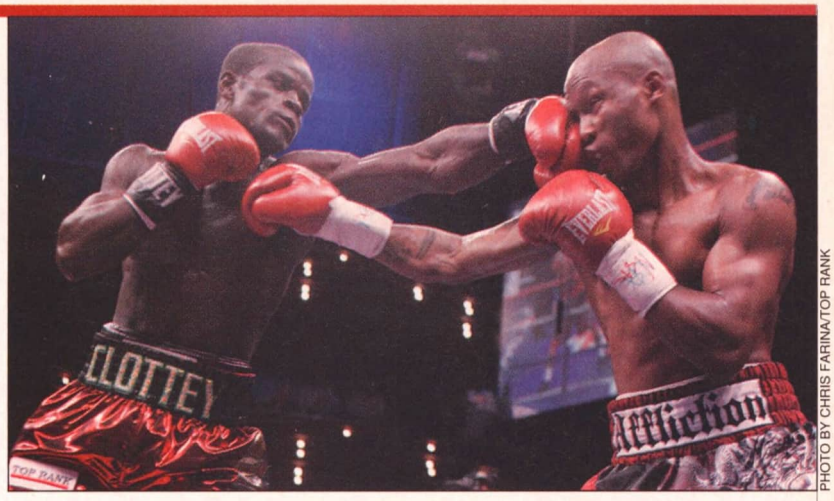

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Clottey's left is quicker and straighter than Judah's right

[THE RING Fighter of the Month]

Antonio Margarito

One of the sporting world's most tired clichés is that one about the irresistible force meeting the immovable object. And that's precisely how many observers labeled Antonio Margarito vs. Miguel Cotto going into the fight. Coming out of the fight, however, the cliché got an interesting twist. Over the course of 11 grueling rounds, Margarito had proved himself to be both the irresistible force *and* the immovable object.

It was Cotto's complete inability to move Margarito—jabs, hooks, straight rights, body-shots, it didn't matter—that loomed menacingly over the Puerto Rican's lead on the scorecards through the first half of the fight. Beginning in round seven, Margarito showed his irresistible force dimension, battering Cotto, bloodying him, and, eventually, making him surrender. Cotto took a knee twice in the 11th round, the second time not because of a punch, but because of the punches that were soon to come. Margarito was a force Cotto simply could not resist any longer.

With an impressive knockout of Kermit Cintron earlier this year and one more meaningful bout likely toward the end of '08, Margarito will probably be a strong candidate for Fighter of the Year. For now, though, he'll have to settle for Fighter of the Month, in one of THE RING's easier editorial decisions in recent memory.

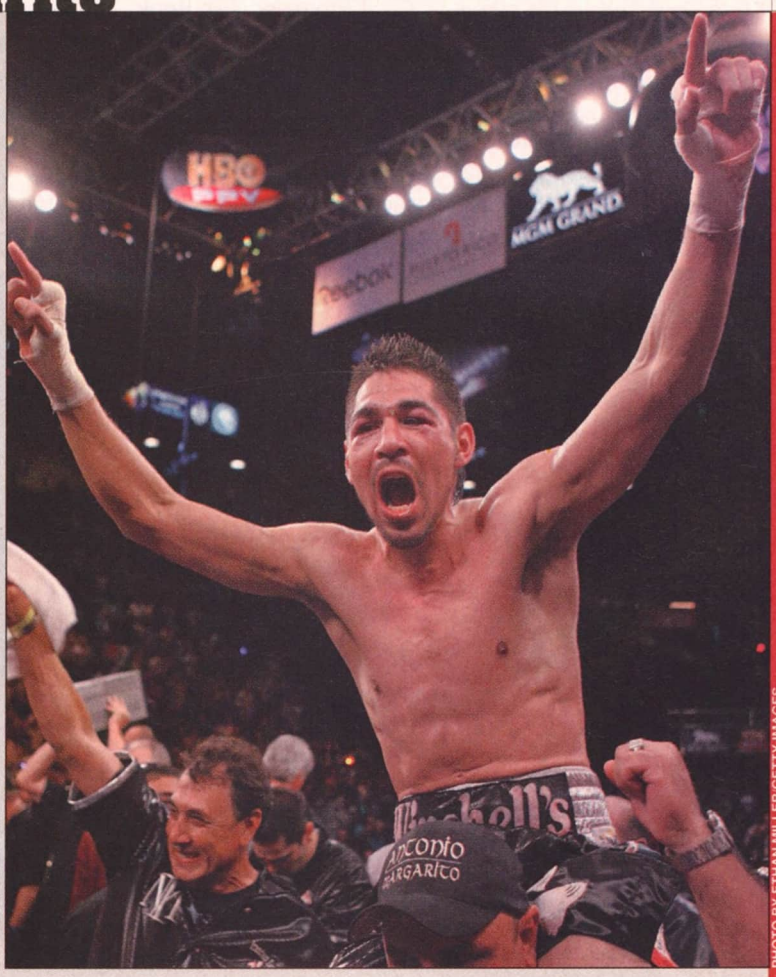

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

nose that was clearly broken. Despite suffering a minor biceps injury in the fourth, Clottey began finding a home for a nasty uppercut and his left hand in the fifth.

Judah seemed to catch a second wind in the sixth, which he appeared to win with a heavier pace, despite being warned for a second time by referee Robert Byrd (USA) for low blows. Clottey came back to take the seventh with cleaner shots, including two rights that again wobbled his opponent. Judah appeared to take a close eighth with a strong finish.

The sudden ending to the fight, with Judah seemingly coming on, didn't sit well with the announced crowd of 1,800, which seemed to believe Judah had won. Actually, if the abbreviated ninth round hadn't been scored, the bout would have ended in a draw. Then again, if the ref had identified the cut as having been caused by a punch, Clottey would have won by TKO. According to CompuBox, Clottey landed 122 of 393 shots (31 percent) to Judah's 117 of 419 (28 percent) on the night, with Clottey throwing only 30 jabs.

"He hit me with some uppercuts," Clottey said, "but I never felt anything. He never hurt me; trust me. In my boxing life, nobody has hurt me."

Judah demanded a rematch afterward, to which Clottey said it was up to the promoters. His promoter appeared to have other plans. So it could be another long wait before this rivalry is settled.

Promoter: **Top Rank**
Television: **HBO**
(8-2-08)

Daniel Santos KO 6 Joachim Alcine

Montreal, Quebec: It can be argued that Puerto Rico's Santos is somewhat underexposed and underappreciated compared to some of his fighting compatriots. When the 32-year-old veteran from Bayamon scored what may turn out to be 2008's Knockout of the Year, against Alcine, he probably took some steps toward becoming more appreciated, though the bout, which wasn't televised in the U.S., did little for his exposure problems. Still, in spoiling Alcine's mandatory defense of the WBA 154-pound title in front of a crowd of approximately 8,000 at Uniprix Stadium in his adopted hometown, Santos re-entered the title picture, scoring his most meaningful win in four years.

Santos, 153, hadn't exactly been burning up the ring since notching the most significant win of his career, a 10-round technical decision over Antonio Margarito in '04. A decision loss to Sergei Dzindziruk the following year, which saw him surrender the WBO strap, was followed by a spate of inactivity where he fought only once each year.

A physically gifted boxer, the 32-year-old Alcine, 153, showed a lack of ring maturity in his outing against Santos despite a sterling 30-0 (19) record going in. He boxed out of an unusually wide stance and looked frustrated by his opponent's southpaw positioning and counterpunching abilities. And he showed a readiness to abandon his skills as a consummate stylist, and that was a big part of what cost him the belt.

Within a minute of the first round, Santos was already lining up his left and looking to time the punch. He took heats one and three by forcing several awkward exchanges, despite fielding a solid right and follow-up left hook by Alcine in the third that drew cheers from the local fighter's legion of supporters.

But the most compelling contact going on in the ring occurred on the several occasions when Alcine stepped on Santos' lead foot while jockeying for punching position. Referee Marlon B. Wright (Canada) warned Alcine against the infraction on several occasions, prompted by vocal complaints by Santos.

In a sudden reversal of strategy in the fourth, Santos commenced with an effective boxing clinic that saw him open up with two- and three-punch combinations, while dodging firepower from an increasingly aggressive Alcine. Normally a calculating boxer, Alcine was being lured into the unfamiliar role of the aggressor by his more experienced opponent, and it played right into Santos' strategy, as he unloaded quick salvos, dodged punches inside, and circled to his right out of the line of fire.

With the exchanges coming more frequently by round six, Alcine seemed invested with newfound confidence as he kept the pressure on a mobile Santos

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

Santos en route to handing Alcine his first defeat

and sought to cut off the ring and trap the challenger along the ropes. But the titlist's focus on offense cost him. About two minutes into the round, Santos, 32-2-1 (23), circled away and unleashed a short right jab, followed by a perfect straight left. Alcine, about to launch a left hook, caught the blow flush and collapsed to the canvas, fully sprawled out on his back. Wright began to toll the count, and as Alcine stirred and attempted to push himself off the canvas, he pitched forward face-first, and the bout was immediately halted at 2:06 of the round.

Promoters: **Groupe Yvon Michel (GYM), Don King Productions**
(07-11-08)

Alex Bunema KO 6 Walter Matthysse

Montreal, Quebec: The unlikely comeback of veteran junior middleweight contender Bunema continued at Uniprix Stadium on the undercard of Santos-Alcine, as the Memphis, Tennessee-based Congan followed up his shocking knockout of Roman Karmazin with a steady beatdown of Argentine puncher Matthysse. Written off by most after a March '04 knockout loss to the much bigger Jermain Taylor, Bunema, 33, is now in the thick of the title picture in a relatively thin 154-pound division.

After beginning his career 25-0 (24), Matthysse has become little more than a target for heavy shots since graduating to world-class opposition, losing by kayo to welterweights Paul Williams, Kermit Cintron, and Sebastian Lujan. The fight with Bunema was Matthysse's first at junior middle in three years, and it went every bit as poorly as his recent welterweight experiences.

Bunema, 153, was in charge from the outset, walking through the best offerings of Matthysse, 153, and repeatedly pinning him on the ropes. In a thrilling fourth round, Bunema, 30-5-2 (15), seemed to be on the verge of punching himself out as he battered the Argentine, but he found a second wind and continued hammering Matthysse with both hands. At the very end of round six, Bunema made Matthysse, 29, slump from a left hook, and followed with a sizzling left uppercut and another hook in combination, dropping his man hard. Matthysse, 26-4 (25), rose slowly, and after he got back to his feet, referee Michael Griffin (Canada) looked into his glassy eyes and wisely called off the bout at the 3:00 mark.

Promoters: **Groupe Yvon Michel (GYM), King Productions**
(07-11-08)

Cesar Canchila W 12 Giovanni Segura

Las Vegas, Nevada: Canchila, 108, Barranquilla, Colombia, came into this "interim" alphabet title fight on the Antonio Margarito-Miguel Cotto undercard at MGM Grand as an unknown, having never fought outside of his homeland prior. After getting off the canvas to win a highly entertaining bout and hand the dangerous Segura, 108, Bell Gardens, California, his first defeat, Canchila isn't an unknown anymore.

The 5'5" Canchila, 26, gave himself a deep hole to climb out of after he got knocked down in the second round. But all he did after that was dominate the fight. Helped by a late fade from Segura, who'd grown perhaps a bit too accustomed to scoring quick knockout wins, the Colombian won comfortably on all three scorecards.

Segura, 26, had been turning heads with his exciting, winging, all-offense style, and it didn't take long for him to try to establish it. He jumped right on Canchila in the opening round, landing a few heavy right hands to the face, mixed in with a few to the body. The early assault had Canchila holding on, trying to buy time and sort things out.

In the second, the 5'5" Segura continued building confidence. He stalked Canchila, and after the South American lashed back with a right down the middle, catching Segura in the face, Segura countered with a right that produced the only knockdown of the fight.

The knockdown served as a wake-up call for Canchila. He went on to win nine of the next 10 rounds on THE RING'S scorecard (the eighth being the exception). He started using his jab more, then throwing an occasional left hook. He worked the body and the head, while Segura kept winging wild, wide shots. Some landed. Most didn't.

Segura's early attempts for a knockout backfired. He appeared tired, and Canchila's superior technique and accurate punching seized control of the fight. His boxing

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Canchila came off the floor to upset Segura

skills also exposed Segura, 19-1-1 (15), whose attack was crude and without direction.

The scorecards reflected that. Judges Patricia Jarman (USA) and Dr. Ruben Garcia (USA) both had it 117-110 for the Colombian, while Adalaide Byrd (USA) scored it a little closer, 115-112. THE RING saw the fight 116-111 for Canchila, 27-1 (12), whose unanimous decision win earned him the interim WBA junior flyweight title.

Jay Nady (USA) was the referee.

Television: **HBO Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(7-26-08)
Joseph Santoliquito

Vic Darchinyan KO 5 Dimitri Kirilov

Tacoma, Washington: One of the most bizarre sights in professional boxing is to see the crouched, crablike figure of the hardest-hitting junior bantamweight in the world come scuttling across the ring throwing punches. Doing precisely that, and doing it as effectively as he ever has, "Raging Bull" Darchinyan, 114, gored Kirilov, 114½, before a bloodthirsty standing-room-only-crowd that filled the Emerald Queen Casino's fight arena to take home the IBF junior bantamweight title.

Darchinyan, Sydney, Australia, who defended the IBF flyweight belt six times before losing via upset knockout to Nonito Donaire and moving up, completely overwhelmed and dominated "The Baby" from the onset of a one-sided bout. Kirilov, St. Petersburg, Russia, was unable to do anything except to take murderous punches for five bloody and painful rounds. He is now 1-3-1 with no knockouts in title bouts.

The opening round saw Darchinyan take immediate control by imposing his will on Kirilov. Kirilov seemed to have no answer to the unorthodox body and hand movements of this aggressive puncher.

In the third round, a fine mist of blood shot out of Kirilov's nostrils as he snorted in pain, and the clubbing lefts and rights kept hammering home on his youthful visage. No one can deny the courage of the Russian, who never stopped trying, and whose expression was one of calm equanimity as Darchinyan went about his torturous destruction. Kirilov's trainer, Freddie Roach, implored him to move more to his left, but nothing Kirilov tried was working.

In the fifth, Darchinyan, 32, deposited Kirilov, 29, on the floor, where he settled for a moment, his eyes clouded with frustration and bewilderment. To his credit, the titlist arose and went back into the fray while keeping his composure, but the chopping lefts of the Raging Bull left the facial features of Kirilov a gory mess of cuts and contusions. A second knockdown followed, and Kirilov went down on his back with his legs swinging up into the air. He got to his knees before pawing at the lower ring rope and failing to beat the count. Referee Earl Brown (USA) waved the fight over at 1:05 of the fifth round.

At the time of the stoppage, judges Marty Denkin (USA), Glen Hamada (USA), and Tom McDonough (USA) all had the fight scored 40-36 in favor of Darchinyan, 30-1-1 (24).

The new beltholder said, "I am seeking unification and want to collect all the belts, and I can do it because no one has power like me. After I have all the belts, Nonito Donaire can come and collect from me, but he will then have one big, long dream."

Kirilov, 29-4-1 (10), subdued and sad, sat quietly in his dressing room. "I felt I was in control of the fight, but I got a little careless," he said. "He is the best fighter I have ever fought, and right now I am just really disappointed."

Promoters: **Gotham Boxing, Brian Halquist Productions**
Television: **Showtime**
(8-2-08)
Oliver W. Tuthill Jr.

Andre Dirrell KO 4 Mike Paschall

Tacoma, Washington: With hand speed and body movement reminiscent of the once-great Roy Jones, Dirrell, 168, Flint, Michigan, showcased his enormous talents in stopping the tough Paschall, 166½, Baltimore, Maryland, at 1:34 of the fourth round at the Emerald Queen Casino.

The 28-year-old Paschall, who was undefeated in 18 prior fights against modest opposition, came to fight and showed no fear of engaging Dirrell upon commencement of the first round, aggressively charging him and initiating quick exchanges in the middle of the ring. Paschall displayed confidence and a willingness to mix it up with the 2004 Olympic bronze medalist. Around the middle of the opening round, Dirrell switched from southpaw to orthodox to befuddle his game foe.

In the second, Dirrell, 24, slammed home a hard left that had Paschall shaking his head to communicate to Dirrell and the crowd that the punch did not hurt him—but it foreshadowed the ugly ending that awaited him.

In the third, Dirrell showed excellent defensive reflexes, repeatedly leaning away from Paschall's punches. In one instance, though, his reflexes failed him, as "The Persecutor" caught Dirrell with a solid left hand. But it didn't slow down the ambidextrous super middleweight.

In the fourth, there were two harsh clashes of heads, and Paschall was frequently pawing at his face with his right glove to see if he had sustained a cut. Moments later, "The Matrix" slipped to Paschall's left and dropped him with a blistering left hand. As Paschall stood up, the crowd gasped in shock from the sight of blood spurting out of a deep crevice in his forehead. Replays showed that the punch landed on the nose, making it that much more puzzling that it tore Paschall open about two inches above where it struck.

After Paschall easily beat the count, referee Bobby Howard (USA) stopped the action and called in the ringside physician, who told Howard the cut was too deep for the encounter to continue. Howard stopped the bout, and it goes into the books as a TKO win for Dirrell, 16-0 (11), at 1:34 of the fourth round.

Paschall, 17-1-1 (4), wanted to continue fighting and showed great courage. "He said he'll give me a rematch," Paschall said. Dirrell is looking ahead to bigger opportunities. "I'm looking forward to fighting someone in the top 10, and I'm ready to take on anyone they put in front of me."

Promoters: **Gotham Boxing, Brian Halquist Productions**
Television: **Showtime**
(8-2-08)
Oliver W. Tuthill Jr.

PHOTO BY TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Naito (left) rallies from behind to stop Shimizu

Daisuke Naito KO 10 Tomonobu Shimizu

Tokyo, Japan: WBC flyweight titlist Naito, 112, Japan, barely and breathlessly kept his belt as he abruptly scored a come-from-behind knockout over compatriot Shimizu, 112, at 0:57 of the 10th session at Yoyogi First Gym. Sluggish and less accurate from the outset, Naito was trailing on all three cards when he scored the stoppage, making his victory somewhat reminiscent of Jake LaMotta's famous 15th-round kayo of Laurent Dauthuille (though obviously less dramatic because there were still a couple of scheduled rounds remaining).

Naito, 33, appears to be slipping, as he looked slower, less sharp, and less accurate than usual. Shimizu, who failed in a bid to unseat Pongsaklek Wonjongkam for the same title 15 months earlier, had studied the titleholder's style and defects carefully, came in with a game plan, and gave an unexpectedly good performance before Naito caught up with him.

Making his third defense since upsetting Pongsaklek for the title, Naito attempted an opening attack but took a few well-timed right counters from Shimizu, 27. Naito utilized low ducking and showboating to try to frustrate the challenger, but Shimizu kept at a distance and kept moving to avert Naito's roundhouse blows, countering with overhand rights and left hooks with precision.

After the fourth was over, the WBC open scoring system showed two tallies of 38-38 and one of 39-37 for Shimizu. If anything, the scores were a little generous to Naito, who was missing the target with nearly all of his punches.

Upright stylist Shimizu was also in command in the fifth, as he outjabbed his sluggish opponent. Naito seemed to take round six, however, aggressively pursuing the challenger, who seemed content just to avert Naito's wild punches.

After Shimizu connected with a series of right counters to win the eighth, the official scores were disclosed again: 77-75 and 77-76 for Shimizu, and 76-76. The rhythmically moving challenger dominated the ninth with his boxing skills, extending his lead to one, two, and three points on the cards.

The titlist was desperate to turn the tide. Encouraged by his corner, Naito came out fighting in the 10th and threw wild punches at the bewildered challenger. A solid left hook following a right shook him up effectively, and Naito connected with two big rights to the side of the head. Shimizu went down. Frustrated with himself for getting careless, Shimizu pounded the canvas with his gloves before rising.

As soon as Shimizu resumed fighting, Naito swarmed over him with a flurry of roundhouse left and right hooks, which again sent him to the canvas. Shimizu, 13-3 (5), couldn't pull himself up and was counted out by referee Frank Garza (USA).

The titlist was crying for joy, while the crestfallen challenger was crying different kind of tears on the stool. Naito, 33-2-3 (21), said in his postfight interview, "It was a shameful performance, as I was losing on points. So I went all out for retaliation to keep my belt. Next time I'll show a better fight."

Unbeaten Koki Kameda then climbed up to the ring to celebrate Naito's dramatic triumph. Kameda said, "It was a beautiful victory, and I'll challenge Naito." If that's true, Naito can expect a handsome payday in such a sensational encounter.

Promoter: **Miyata Promotions**
(7-30-08)
Joe Koizumi

Takefumi Sakata W 12 Hiroyuki Hisataka

Tokyo, Japan: WBA flyweight king Sakata, 112, Japan, successfully defended the belt for the fourth time as he pounded out a unanimous decision over countryman Hisataka, 112, over 12 rounds at Yoyogi First Gym. Japanese judges Takeshi Shimakawa and Takeo Harada tallied 118-

111 and 116-112, respectively, and Pinit Prayadsab, of Thailand, saw it 117-111, all for the more aggressive Sakata. The referee was Kazunobu Asao (Japan).

It was a very monotonous, lopsided affair, as the 28-year-old Sakata easily controlled rounds two through 11. Strangely, the 23-year-old challenger dominated the first and the last sessions.

Hisakata, who had lost three consecutive fights but got rated number three by the WBA thanks to his upset victory over Hussein Hussein last December, landed quick counters against the onrushing Sakata in the opening canto. But Sakata, a notoriously slow starter, warmed up his engine in the second and kept stalking the circling and countering the challenger.

The sixth witnessed Sakata, battling through a cut over his right eyebrow, accelerate his attack, as he brilliantly displayed versatile offensive bursts upstairs and downstairs. But Sakata isn't a hard puncher, so the damage he caused was minimal.

The dull affair suddenly became hot enough to shake off the crowd's sleepiness in the 11th. The beltholder kept battering the negative challenger, who abruptly turned loose just after Sakata's cut was again examined by the ringside physician. The round had been overwhelmingly dominated by Sakata, but Hisataka, 16-7-1 (5), threw a furious barrage of punches in the closing seconds.

Hisataka's momentum carried over into the final session, when he threw strong shots to hurt Sakata. It forced everyone to wonder why Hisataka didn't start punching like that earlier, but probably Sataka's body attack had something to do with it, as his steady work to the midsection limited the challenger's energy.

Sakata, 33-4-2 (15), said, "I wasn't satisfied with my performance tonight, and will show a better fight." It was the same thing Daisuke Naito said after his successful defense in the main event.

TBS television in Japan labeled the twin bill "Who's The Strongest?" But Naito looked terrible, while Sakata was almost as disappointing.

Promoters: **Kyoei Promotions, Miyata Promotions**

(7-30-08)

Joe Koizumi

PHOTO BY TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Sakata (right) has to settle for a monotonous decision over Hisataka

Delvin Rodriguez KO 11 Oscar Diaz

San Antonio, Texas: It was precisely the reason why we watch boxing. And at the same time, it was precisely the reason why we must sometimes question our love for the sport. After 10 rounds of a high-energy, all-action fight between competitively matched welterweight fringe contenders, the 25-year-old Diaz unexpectedly collapsed in his corner. He received emergency medical treatment, was rushed to University Hospital, had surgery for bleeding on the brain, and remained in a coma as of press time, with doctors expressing optimism that he will survive.

Fighting at Municipal Auditorium in his hometown, Diaz, 147, was clearly the crowd favorite, but Rodriguez, 147, Danbury, Connecticut, was generally viewed as the slight betting favorite in this pivotal battle of fighters with two losses apiece on their records. Over the first three rounds, Rodriguez, 28, showed why he was favored, using his height and his superior speed to pile up points. Rodriguez possesses power too, and he flashed it midway through the third round, when a left hook caused Diaz to stumble back.

Diaz temporarily turned things around in the fourth when he landed a heavy right hand. The punch spun Rodriguez around and sent him staggering toward the ropes, very nearly hitting the deck. Diaz tried his best to follow up and finish Rodriguez off, but "D-Rod" recovered quickly and re-asserted his jab.

Rodriguez kept his range and took round five, but Diaz bulled his way inside to carry the sixth. The seventh was a toss-up, with Rodriguez landing well early and Diaz working the body effectively late. From the eighth round on, however, Rodriguez took control of the bout. A purplish swelling rose under the right eye of Diaz, 26-3 (12), and it made

him more tentative, allowing Rodriguez, 23-2-1 (14), to pad his lead. The 10th was one of Rodriguez' best rounds, particularly when he landed a long right hand that turned Diaz' head and followed it with two left hooks. With two rounds to go, the fight was becoming one-sided, but not to the point that anyone could foresee the tragedy to come.

As the 11th round was about to begin, referee Robert Gonzalez (USA) asked Diaz if he was okay, and the fighter let out an anguished scream and placed his glove against his head. His legs soon went out from under him, and he was flat on the canvas just a moment later, the medical staff attending to him immediately. As 10 seconds had actually ticked off the clock in the next round, it was ruled an 11th-round TKO win for Rodriguez.

Television: **ESPN2**
Promoter: **Star Boxing**
(7-16-08)

Alexander Povetkin KO 4 Taurus Sykes

Chekhov, Russia: He won gold in the super heavyweight division at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, but Povetkin, 227½, Moscow, Russia, lacks knockout power and ferocity. An 11th-round stoppage of former IBF heavyweight titleholder Chris Byrd, when the American was a long way past his peak, is his most impressive performance to date. When he boxed Eddie Chambers, another American, in January 2008, his performance against a boxer whose defense is considerably more impressive than his offense was uninspiring. Povetkin may be Wladimir Klitschko's next challenger, however, even if his fourth-round stoppage of Sykes, 238, Brooklyn, New York, did not inspire any more than the Chambers fight did.

In fairness, this had more to do with Sykes, 25-5 (7), and his inability to ask serious questions of Povetkin. The 33-year-old American went the 10-round distance with former world heavyweight champion Hasim Rahman in his previous bout, but Rahman is arguably a shot fighter. Sykes was also blasted away inside two rounds by Sam Peter in 2005 and by Derek Bryant in four rounds in 2006, and the disparity in class was apparent almost instantly.

After a nondescript opening round, Sykes began to reel away from Povetkin's punches in the second, although the 28-year-old Russian did not appear to be landing heavily. The American's lack of ambition was glaringly apparent, and in round three he fell to the floor and seemed disappointed when Russian referee Alexander Kalinkin ruled it a slip. The referee even had to help him back to his feet, and Povetkin, clearly, had landed nothing of note.

Before coming off his stool for the fourth round, Sykes told his trainer, "I can't do it," but he received no sympathy. Sykes simply did not want to fight, but why had he bothered to turn up then? The finish was farcical. Povetkin, 16-0 (12), landed a decent left hook to the jaw and missed with two rights as Sykes sagged against the ropes and went down. He remained on his back until the referee counted him out at 0:48 of the fourth, though he seemingly could have gotten back to his feet if he had chosen to. A sad spectacle, though one in keeping with a division that is mostly derelict.

Promoter: **Wilfried Sauerland**
(7-19-08)
Brian Doogan

James Toney No-Contest 3 Hasim Rahman

Temecula, California: We just can't seem to get a conclusive ending when veteran heavyweights Toney and Rahman step into the ring together. Their first fight, in March '06—when both were RING-rated contenders—ended in a majority draw after 12 rounds, and the rematch more than two years later—with neither man rated by THE RING anymore—resulted in a no-contest after just three rounds of action. The fighters' heads clashed in the third and Rahman, who had a bad cut over the left eye, claimed he couldn't see, prompting a stoppage. Initially, Toney was awarded a TKO victory, but 12 days later, following an appeal by Rahman's promoter, Top Rank, the result was changed to another sister-kisser.

The action prior to the early ending was not especially

PHOTO BY ARTYOM KOROTAYEV/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Referee Kalinkin raises Povetkin's arm following perfunctory kayo of Sykes

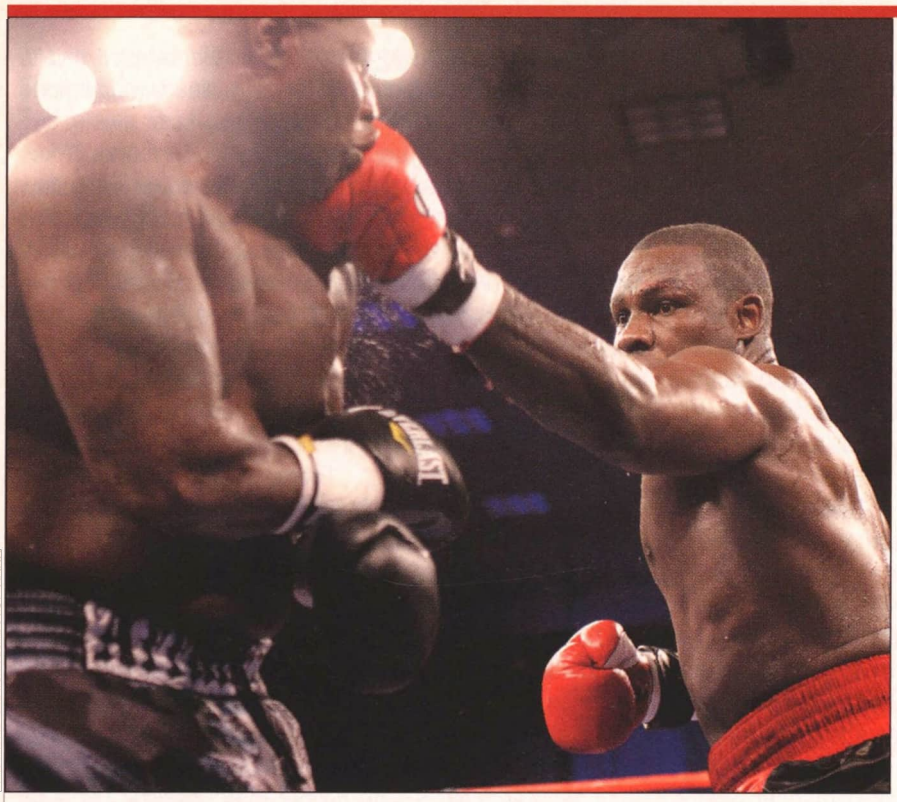

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Rahman pecks away at Toney with a jab

inspiring. Toney claimed to be in better shape than usual, and the 226 pounds he weighed was his lightest in nearly five years, but it was a loose and flabby 226, no more aesthetically pleasing than how he's looked when scaling in the 230s. Rahman, 244, Baltimore, Maryland, worked that soft body reasonably well in the opening round at Pechanga Resort and Casino, while Toney, Sherman Oaks, California, did some decent work with his jab.

Toney, 39, was in complete control in the second round, landing beautiful counterpunches against the slower Rahman, 35, and snapping his head back on a few occasions. Toney was also doing well with counter rights in the third until the head clash left Rahman bleeding. Predictably, Rahman was even easier for Toney to hit after he got cut.

After the round, the ringside physician asked "The Rock" if he wanted to continue, and the former heavyweight champ responded that he couldn't see. He essentially quit on the stool, and when referee Ray Corona (USA) stopped the fight on the doctor's advice, he ruled it a TKO, saying that the fighter did not want to continue, which overruled the fact that his injuries were caused by an accidental foul. However, after the Rahman camp sent in a formal protest, the California State Athletic Commission ruled that the cut forced the stoppage and that it didn't matter if Rahman quit, changing the verdict to a no-contest.

"I'm not going to fight with one eye," said Rahman, 45-6-2 (36) with 1 no-contest, after the fight. "I couldn't see the punches."

"I made him quit," Toney, 70-6-3 (43) with 2 no-contests, asserted. "I'm the best heavyweight fighter in the world."

The latter statement seems laughable. But Toney did look like the best heavyweight fighter in the ring on this night for the three rounds that the contest lasted.

Television: **Fox Sports**
Promoter: **Goossen-Tutor Promotions**
(7-16-08)

Jeff Lacy W 10
Epifanio Mendoza

Cabazon, California: When in trouble, the good ones find ways to survive, whether it's a well-timed clinch, removing the mouthpiece, or a wrestling takedown. Lacy, 170, St. Petersburg, Florida, might have salvaged a big-money fight with Jermain Taylor by using the latter against Mendoza, 171, Colombia, in the eighth round of their entertaining super middleweight scrap.

Hurt by a one-two midway through the round, Lacy appeared to be in danger when he lunged forward and tackled Mendoza, whose head bounced off the bottom rope as he fell backward. Referee Jack Reiss (USA) called a timeout to give Mendoza a chance to recover, but it was actually Lacy who got a chance to regain his senses. The 2000 U.S. Olympian went on to capture a close, majority decision at the Morongo Casino Resort and Spa.

For Lacy, who was coming off narrow wins against Vitali Tsypko and Peter Manfredo, it was his third close call in a row since a one-sided loss to super middleweight champion Joe Calzaghe in 2006. Mendoza, who was coming off a fourth-round knockout loss to light heavyweight Chad Dawson last fall, was supposed to be an easier task for "Left Hook," but the bout turned out to be much more competitive than many had anticipated.

Lacy, 31, got the better of it in the first half. He used several solid right hands to take the opening round, though Mendoza, 32, came back to hurt Lacy in the second with a right hand upstairs that had the former beltholder stumbling.

Lacy, 24-1 (17), stayed on his feet, and then closed with a hard left hook to the head. He got the better of the exchanges in the third and fourth rounds, both of which were fought mostly at close range. In the fifth, Lacy appeared to be taking over after hurting his opponent with several right hands that had Mendoza holding on.

Mendoza, 28-6-1 (24), got back into it in the sixth, when he opened with a solid right hand that jarred Lacy's mouthpiece loose. After being given a brief timeout to reinsert the mouthguard, Lacy then ate an uppercut on the inside that bloodied his nose. Lacy's left eye was beginning to swell during a close seventh round that saw both land decent shots.

After barely surviving the eighth, Lacy spent much of the

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Mendoza had Lacy in trouble, but couldn't finish him off

ninth staying out of danger before flurrying in the final 30 seconds, though Mendoza slipped in a couple of uppercuts that appeared to give him the round. Both fighters were tired in the 10th, but Lacy had a bit more juice remaining as he scored late with a few two-punch combinations.

Dr. Lou Moret (USA) scored it 95-95, Marty Denkin (USA) had it 96-94 for Lacy, and Jerry Cantu (USA) had Lacy ahead, 97-93. THE RING scored it 95-95. The CompuBox numbers reflected how close this one was: Lacy landed 172 of 518 shots (33 percent), while Mendoza connected on 165 of 488 (34 percent).

A few days after the fight, Lacy told the *Tampa Tribune* that he was fed up with the boxing business and had decided to retire. He had a change of heart three days later, though, when he agreed to terms on the Taylor fight.

Promoter: **Golden Boy Promotions**
Television: **ESPN2**
(7-23-08)

Ulises Solis W 12 Glenn Donaire

Hermosillo, Mexico: After making four defenses of the IBF light flyweight strap in 2007, Solis got off to a much slower start in '08, this July defense against Donaire being his first of the year. But the trend established in Solis' first six defenses continued, as he won comfortably, further establishing himself as one of the most worthy potential challengers to RING champion Ivan Calderon.

This bout took place at Palenque De La Expo, on the undercard of Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.'s close shave against Matt Vanda. How close of a shave Solis-Donaire was depends on which set of scores you trust. The scores announced in the ring were 120-108 from both Dr. Ruben Garcia (USA) and Joe Garcia (USA) and 120-107 from Alfredo Polanco (Mexico), all in favor of Solis. But it was a much more competitive fight than that, and according to Top Rank publicist Ricardo Jimenez, Lennon was given the wrong scores and the actual tallies were 118-108, 117-110, and 115-112. Those certainly seemed like more believable cards. But officially, the commission in Mexico never issued a correction, and as of press time, the shutout scores were the ones on record.

In any case, it was a fast-paced and entertaining bout between the Mexican beltholder and the Filipino challenger, who is the older brother of flyweight titlist Nonito Donaire. Solis, 107½, Guadalajara, Mexico, was generally the busier fighter, but Donaire, 107½, San Leandro, California, via General Santos City, Philippines, seemed to be landing the harder shots. Both fighters did damage with their heads, which banged together in nearly every round. There was a particularly bad head clash in the fourth round, opening a cut over the 26-year-old Solis' left eye.

With Solis relying primarily on his jab, the fight seemed close after five rounds, but the Mexican asserted himself more in round six, opening up with powershots. He practically gave away round seven, however, taking the round off while Donaire, 28, chased him around the ring. But Donaire's momentum came to a halt in the eighth round when he dove in with his head while punching and referee Pat Russell (USA) took a point from him for butting. And from there, Donaire, 17-4-1 (9), never got his momentum back.

Solis outfought Donaire in the ninth and outboxed him in the 10th and 11th, blowing open what had been a close fight. In the final round, Solis, 27-1-2 (20), relied on his jab and his quickness to stay out of trouble, securing his seventh title defense—though the margins by which he secured it may forever remain a mystery.

Solis is now tentatively scheduled for a December 13 fight against former titlist Brian Viloria in Macau, though it should be noted that Top Rank's Bob Arum has discussed staging a card in Macau several times and has had to postpone plans each time.

Promoter: **Top Rank**
(7-12-08) ■

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(Continued from Page 24)

ing with push-ups and sit-ups. Danny laughs at the memory of himself standing there in the gym, weighed down by puffy, black 18-ounce gloves that covered his whole arm and felt like a ton each.

"I could barely lift my hands to throw a punch, but it's where I learned to fight and about the conditioning you need in boxing," Danny said. "I didn't know what it was; I just thought it was fun. I was six, seven years old. I remember being all excited about throwing punches. We'd always go to the gym."

And then, suddenly, they didn't. Angel didn't have the time.

"There was a tough time for me and our family for a few years," Angel recalled. "You work so hard to provide something for your family, you'd do anything. I was working days and nights, trying to make ends meet at the time. I was trying to get a house for us. But I didn't have the time to take him to the gym."

Soon, Angel got regular employment, which opened up time for him to take Danny back to the gym. Danny was grateful to see his father again on a regular basis, instead of seeing him sporadically because of shift work.

It also allowed Angel to take a closer look at a burgeoning talent. Danny just had to learn when and where to throw punches.

"You could tell Danny was gifted from the start, since he was little," Angel said. "However, we had a problem with him in school. He'd see things Chavez was doing on TV and then try them out on kids in school. But those kids would pick on Danny."

Garcia would fight back. He never backed down. To this day, Garcia can't figure out why he was such a target. Maybe it was a look he wore, an invitation that said, "I'm the kid you pick on." There wasn't much that triggered the confrontations. A passing glance would ensue into a stare down, and then disintegrate quickly into a full-fledged brawl.

But there was usually one conclusion, according to Danny: "I always won,

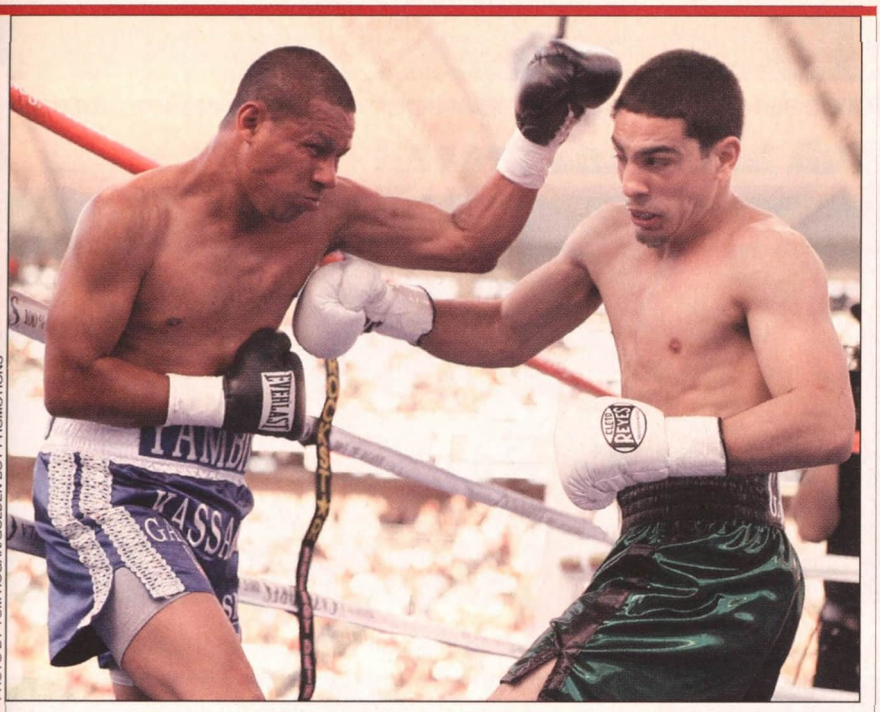

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

Veteran Julio Gamboa forced Garcia to go the distance for the first time in his brief career, but Garcia still won a six-round unanimous decision to keep his unbeaten record intact.

or most of the time. Other kids would come at me or my brother. I was a bad little kid. I'd get into a fight probably two or three times a week. I think I only lost once, to a fifth-grader who kicked me in the chest. I couldn't breathe."

Once he entered middle school and then high school, Garcia outgrew his childish antics. As the streetfights diminished, Danny became more and more prominent on the amateur circuit. He compiled a 107-13 record, including tournament championships in the 2005 under-19 Nationals, the '05 International Championship in Finland, and the '06 U.S. Nationals.

Garcia appeared headed for the U.S. Olympic team and Beijing in '08 before having his hopes derailed by 18-year-old Javier Molina, losing a 26-12 decision in the 141-pound Olympic Trial finals. But Garcia's style is more conducive to the pro game than the amateurs.

"I hold no bitterness, because Molina hit me with these little taps," Garcia said. "It was always a dream to go to the Olympics and represent my country, and that dream disappeared once I lost to Molina. I'll get him back in the pros."

Now Garcia and his father have a two-year plan to garner a title belt, and three years to snare a world championship. The 5'9" Garcia is happy at 140, and says he'd have no problem making that weight for the next few years.

He's coming off the longest layoff he's ever experienced, taking two months to recover from a broken right thumb he suffered while sparring, two weeks after his six-round unanimous decision over Julio Gamboa in early-May.

Garcia still lives at home with his parents, vowing he won't move out until he wins a title. He's comfortable with his situation and with his father as his trainer.

"Me and my dad have a real strong bond," Danny said. "He's the definition of a gym rat and he passed that along to me. We have our moments, because everyone disagrees at one time or another. I know my father is always going to want more from me, and he's the kind of person who will tell you straight out how it is. It can be embarrassing sometimes in front of my friends, but they all know how my dad is."

Danny is 20 years old, but to Angel, he's still that the seven-year-old bobbing and punching in front of the TV set. Angel will smile because he can't stay angry very long. Danny never lets him. ■

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World Junior Welterweight Championship

Ricky Hatton

Main Event 12 Rounds

Paul Malignaggi

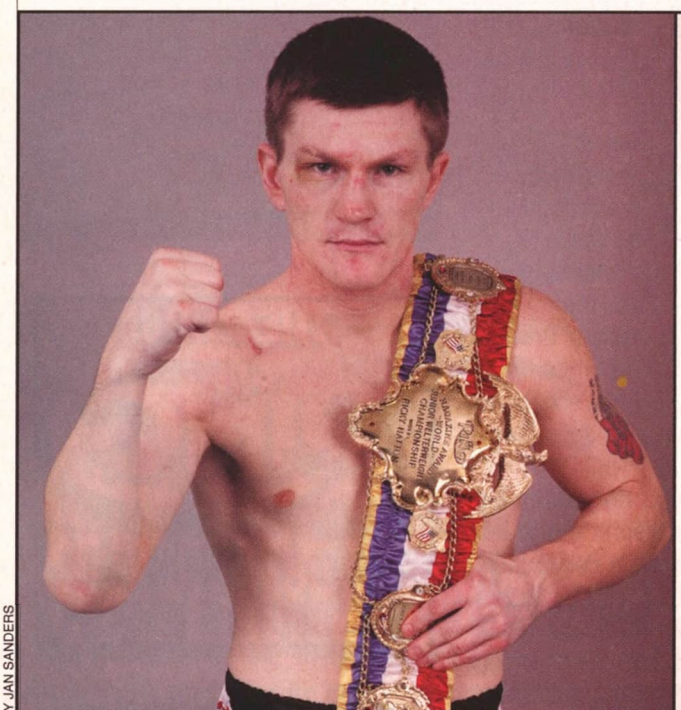


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

After a get-well comeback win in front of his devoted hometown fans, world junior welterweight champion Ricky Hatton returns to Las Vegas, the site of his loss to Floyd Mayweather in December 2007, to defend the 140-pound title against New Yorker Paul Malignaggi.

A year or so ago, a match between the rampaging Hatton and the feather-fisted Malignaggi would have been scoffed at, considered little more than a gimme for the champ. But the kayo loss to Mayweather and his mediocre performance against Juan Lazcano in Manchester has cast a shadow of doubt over Hatton's future. Today, there are a growing number of people who believe Malignaggi has a legitimate chance of outboxing "The Hitman."

Still, although Malignaggi has made two successful defenses of his alphabet strap, he has not been as impressive defending it as he was winning it. He'll clearly have to up his game if the championship is going to change hands.

What it comes down to is an intriguing bout between two fighters with vastly different fighting styles and personalities. Moreover, they are also fighters with questions marks hovering over their heads, questions that will be answered on November 22 at the MGM Grand.

Ricky Hatton

Paul Malignaggi

Record and World Rating

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Hatton plows a right into Urgano's face

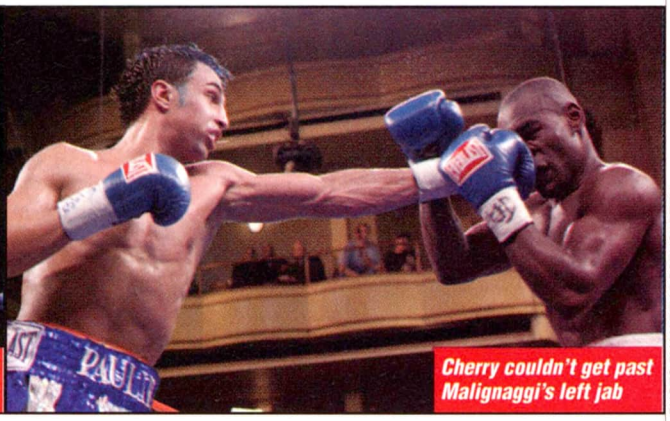


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Cherry couldn't get past Malignaggi's left jab

Is 44-1 with 31 knockouts ... High point of 73-7 amateur career came in 1997 when he won the ABA junior welterweight championship ... Turned pro in September '97 in Widnes, England, with a first-round kayo, the beginning of an glossy streak of 42 consecutive victories ... Won British 140-pound title in October 2000 ... Won world junior welterweight championship in June '05 and has made four successful defenses ... Moved up and won WBA 147-pound belt in January '07, but relinquished title to move back down to 140 ... Failed in bid to win world welterweight title in December '07 ... Is recognized as the world junior welterweight champion by THE RING.

Is 25-1 with 5 knockouts ... Won New York Golden Gloves championships in 1998 and 2001, and 2001 United States National Amateur Championship during stellar 40-9 amateur career ... Turned pro in July '01 in Brooklyn, New York, scoring an opening-round kayo ... Won minor alphabet belt in December '04 and made one successful defense prior to relinquishing ... Suffered first pro loss in June 2006, ending a 20-bout unbeaten run ... Captured IBF junior lightweight strap in June 2007 and has tallied two successful defenses ... Ranked number-one at junior welterweight by THE RING.

Age and Physical Equipment

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Collazo feels the effects of Hatton's hook

Malignaggi tests his right hand on Ndou's head

PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY

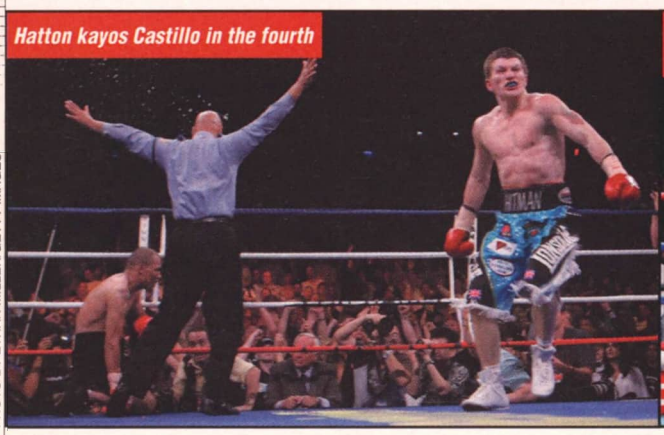
Will be 30 years old by fight date ... Stands 5'7½" with a 65-inch reach ... Exceedingly strong for 140-pounder ... Famous for packing on weight between fights and then boiling down during training, a habit that could be catching up with him ... Chin sturdy but not impervious, and has shown signs of decline in recent bouts ... Facial injuries have become routine ... Excellent endurance thanks to grueling workouts.

Is 27 years old ... Stands 5'8½" with a 70-inch reach ... Blessed with outstanding hand and foot speed ... Chronic hand problems have required several surgeries and have caused layoffs and contributed to dearth of knockouts ... Suffered broken cheek bone in lone pro loss ... Boundless energy allows him to set brisk pace ... Deceiving physical appearance; he's considerably tougher than he looks.

Ricky Hatton

Paul Malignaggi

Best Weapons



Hatton kayos Castillo in the fourth

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Malignaggi's jab keeps Camarena off stride

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Relentless aggression and debilitating bodyshots have carried him to victory in all but one pro outing ... Left hook to head or body most damaging punch ... Adroit use of head, elbows, and shoulders on the inside wears down opponents ... Can jab well when in the mood to fight at range.

Speedy legwork and rapid-fire left jab are his bread and butter ... Defensive ability frustrates foes and creates counterpunching opportunities ... Straight right has some pop, especially when hand is healthy ... Confidence and mental toughness should not be underestimated.

Previous Fight

Won a comprehensive but punishing 12-round unanimous decision over Juan Lazcano in front of a throng of 57,000 fans at the City of Manchester Stadium on May 24 ... Despite lopsided scores of 120-110, 118-110, and 120-108 in Hatton's favor, Lazcano, who had sent most of his career as a lightweight, hurt him with left hooks in the eighth and 11th rounds, prompting some members of the British media to urge him to retire.

Fulfilled contractual obligation to Lovemore Ndou (the man he beat to win the IBF belt) on the Hatton-Lazcano undercard, winning a split decision after 12 close rounds ... Did not perform nearly as well in rematch as in first bout ... Failed to find his rhythm, getting drilled with a left-right combination in the third, and breaking his right hand in the sixth ... Was also distracted by hair extensions, which had to be cut off between rounds.

Quality of Opposition

Graduated to the top level in 2005 with TKO of Kostya Tsyzu after spending the bulk of his career feasting on middle-of-the-road foes ... Since then it's been nothing but world-class competition: Jose Luis Castillo (KO 4), Juan Urango (W 12), Luis Collazo (W 12), Carlos Maussa (KO 9), and Lazcano ... Best of early opposition include Eamonn Magee (W 12), Ben Tackie (W 12), and a faded Vince Phillips (W 12) ... Attempt to unseat P-4-P king Floyd Mayweather (KO by 10) resulted in only pro loss.

Following a series of bouts against the usual suspects the first few years as a pro, began defeating other prospects, such as Chad Lawshe (W 6), Kevin Watts (KO 6), Ramiro Cano (W 10), Jeremy Yelton (W 8), and Donald Camarena (W 10) ... Gigantic step up in class led to painful, 12-round unanimous decision loss to Miguel Cotto ... Rebounded with quartet of wins over worthy opposition in Herman Ngoudjo (W 12), Edner Cherry (W 10), and Ndou (W 12, W 12).

Defense

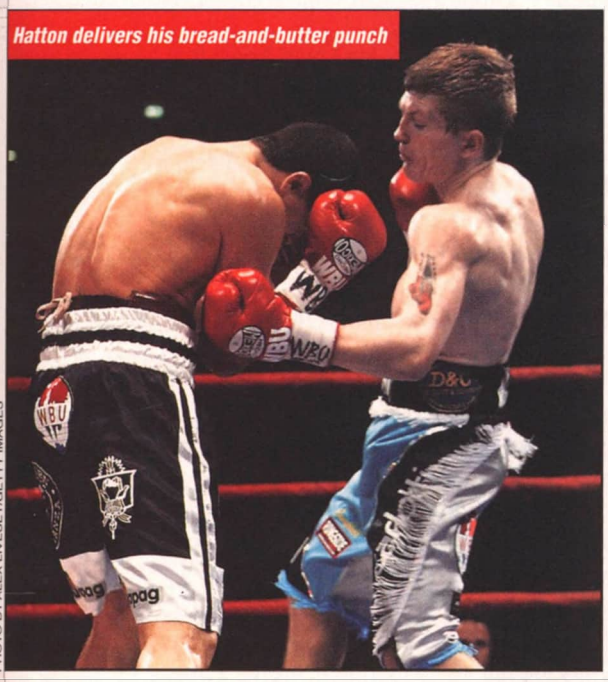
Has always depended on his grinding, mauling attack to keep opponents too busy defending themselves to get their own offense into high gear ... Has on occasion, especially against Tackie, shown the skills to box at range, but is not a regular aspect of his game ... Clinching is first tactical choice if danger threatens, and prodigious upper-body strength makes it difficult for adversaries to break free.

Excellent foot speed combine with shifty boxing skills make him a very tough target ... Highly adept at giving angles and pivoting away from attackers ... Limber legs allow him to climb on his bicycle and stay there for 12 fast-paced rounds ... Understands the concept of boxing at a distance that benefits him, and, other than in the Cotto fight, seldom takes foolish risks.

Ricky Hatton

Paul Malignaggi

Style

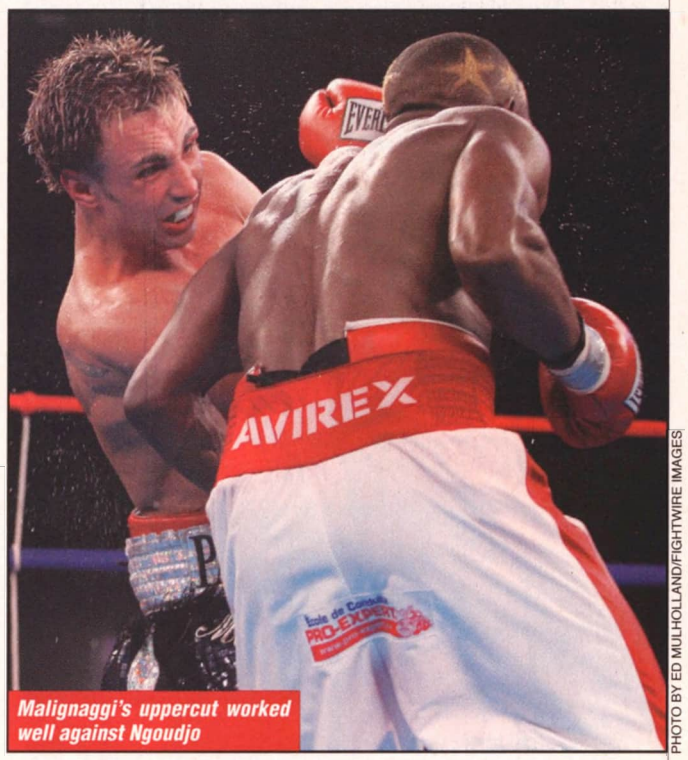


Hatton delivers his bread-and-butter punch

PHOTO BY ALEX LIVESEY/GETTY IMAGES

Marauding pressure fighter who likes to work his way inside and bang away with both hands, especially to the body ... Has relied more and more on clinching between volleys as the opposition has improved ... Highly proficient at bending the rules in the trenches ... Good finishers who knows how to pour on the punches when his prey is ready to go.

Speedy stylist who, at his best, can outbox almost anyone around his weight ... Peppers foes with jabs and then darts in with lead rights when he senses the time is right ... Frustrates adversaries into making mistake on which he can capitalize ... Not above showboating when he can get away with it ... Below average punching power means he seldom goes for a kayo.



Malignaggi's uppercut worked well against Ngoudjo

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

The Questions

Has he fully recovered psychologically from the kayo loss to Mayweather and the surprisingly taxing win over Lazcano? How will parting with long-time trainer Billy Graham affect him? Can he solve Malignaggi's elusive style? How far has he slid since career-defining victory over Tszyu?

Does he punch hard enough to earn Hatton's respect? Will he be lured into exchanges the way he was in the Cotto fight? How will he handle himself on the inside with the physically stronger Hatton? Will his brittle hands let him down again?

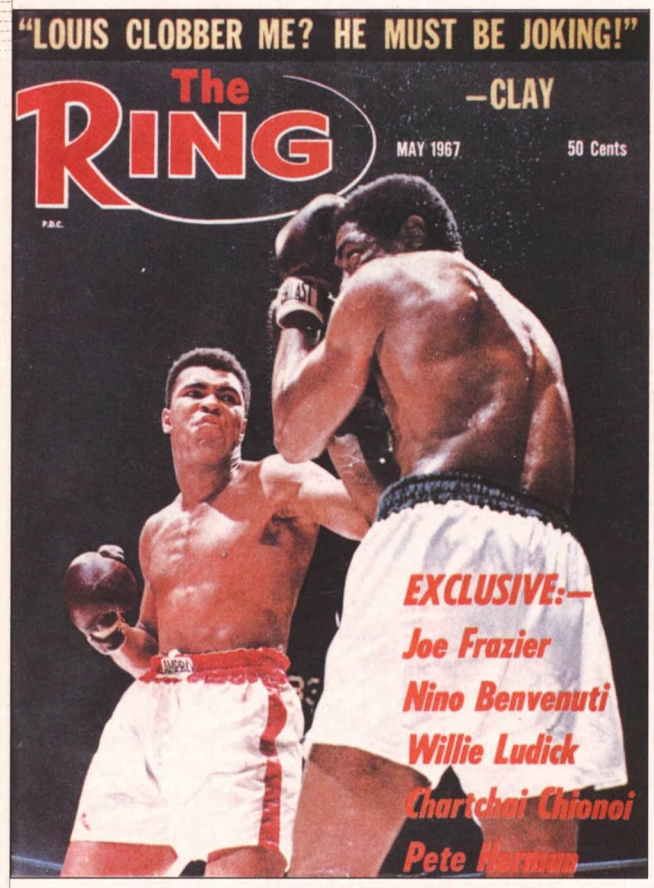
The Outcome

Malignaggi's speed and movement will give Hatton plenty of problems, but without the hard right hands that Mayweather used to discourage the Englishman, he may have trouble keeping Hatton at bay. An upset is within the bounds of reason, but unless Hatton is further past his prime that we think, "The Hitman" will pressure and muscle his way to a close decision.

THE RING Flashback

Through the years with "The Bible of Boxing"

May 1967



COVER STORY: "Louis Clobber me? He Must Be Joking!" by Nat Fleischer, uses remarks Muhammad Ali made while training for his fight with Ernie Terrell as a vehicle to compare the reigning heavyweight champions with some of his predecessors.

Asked his reaction to Joe Louis' boast that he would have "clobbered Cassius Clay," Ali was, at first, diplomatic: "I have a lot of respect for Louis, and if he says he would have clobbered me, he probably is confident he would have done so."

But when pressed for a more definitive answer, Ali revealed his true feelings: "He was a great fighter, but no fighter who shuffles in to meet his opponent, as Louis did, could tag me. I beat such fighters to the punch."

Ali was also quizzed about his perceived lack of punching power.

"Hard punching isn't enough," said Ali. "One must have speed, keenness of eye, science, and a good counterpunch to come through a fight unhurt, uncut, and on top, as I have. Look at my face. Not a sign of injury."

"One cannot argue with the champion on these points," wrote Fleischer. "He definitely has all the aspects except the power of Marciano, Dempsey, and Louis."

"Frazier Uses Jones As Stepping Stone" is Philadelphia correspondent Archie Pirolli's coverage of "Smokin' Joe's" sixth-round knockout of Doug Jones in front of a capacity crowd of 7,203 at the Philadelphia Arena.

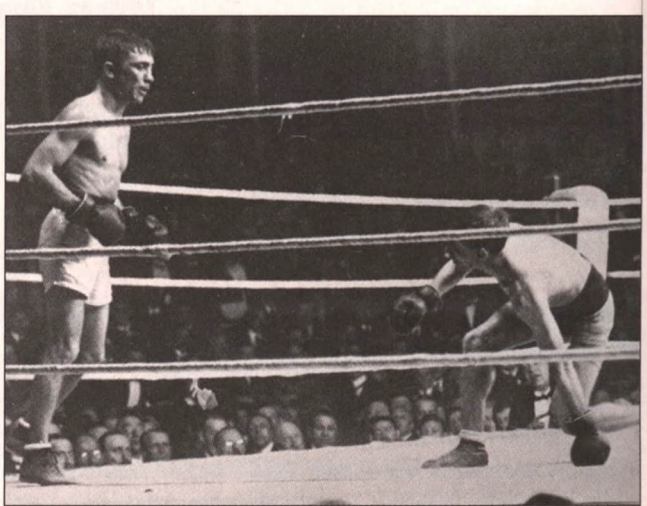
The victory, Frazier's 14th consecutive since turning pro, was considered significant in that he had a much easier time with Jones than Ali had back in 1963. But Jones had gone 8-4 since the Ali fight, including losses in his last two bouts prior to facing Frazier, and was no longer the same fighter he was when he gave Ali such a difficult struggle.

Jones fought only twice after the pounding he took from Frazier, ending Boone Kirkman's unbeaten streak in the first, but then hanging up his gloves for good after Kirkman stopped him in an August '67 rematch. Frazier, of course,

World Champions

(for the period ended March 20)

Heavyweight: Muhammad Ali
Light Heavyweight: Dick Tiger
Middleweight: Emile Griffith
Welterweight: Curtis Cokes
Junior Welterweight: Sandro Lopopolo
Lightweight: Carlos Ortiz
Junior Lightweight: Flash Elorde
Featherweight: Vicente Saldivar
Bantamweight: Fighting Hadara
Flyweight: Chartcahi Chinoi



Herman kayoed Wilde, but didn't get paid

would eventually become undisputed heavyweight champion by beating Ali 13 fights later.

"Pete Herman, At 71, Recalls ... " is based on an interview conducted for THE RING by Ike Morales, 50 years after Herman beat Kid Williams to capture the world bantamweight championship. Even though the New Orleans native said he remembered the Williams fight "as if it were yesterday," the old champ seemed more interested in talking about the financial disaster he suffered after knocking out Jimmy Wilde in London, England, in 1921.

"We received the $5,000 expense money for the Wilde fight in advance," recalls Herman, "but when [manager] Sammy Goldman went to the office to collect my $30,000 guarantee, there was no money. It was a record sum for a bantamweight, and it made me sick. Imagine $30,000 flying out the window! I waited for years in the hope of getting some of my money. But the wait has long since ended."

Herman rated Williams as the "greatest bantam I ever boxed" and his title-winning victory as "definitely the hardest fight of my life."

Herman, who fought professionally from 1912 until 1922, was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1997.

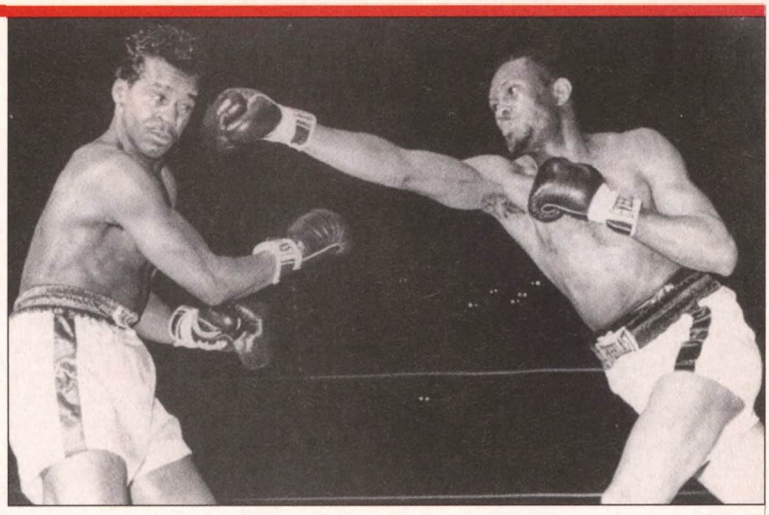
"Cokes Went All Out To Prove He Can Punch" describes welterweight champion Curtis Cokes' third-round kayo of Ted Whitfield in a non-title fight held in Dallas, Texas. Cokes was coming off a lackluster 10-round draw with Francois Pavilla in Paris, France, and eager to make amends by turning in a spectacular performance, and, according to local correspondent Harlan Haas, he did just that.

"In the third round, when Whitfield began to score with his own lefts, Cokes drove Ted into the ropes, blasted his way through the New Englander's defenses, and dropped his opponent for the full count with a devastating uppercut."

Two fights later, Cokes gave Pavilla a title shot and stopped the Frenchman in the 10th round.

"Moreno Through After KO By Benitez" is Don Fraser's coverage of "one-time sensational puncher" Ricardo Moreno's lopssided loss to California featherweight king Alex Benitez in front of 6,100 fans at Los Angeles' Olympic Auditorium.

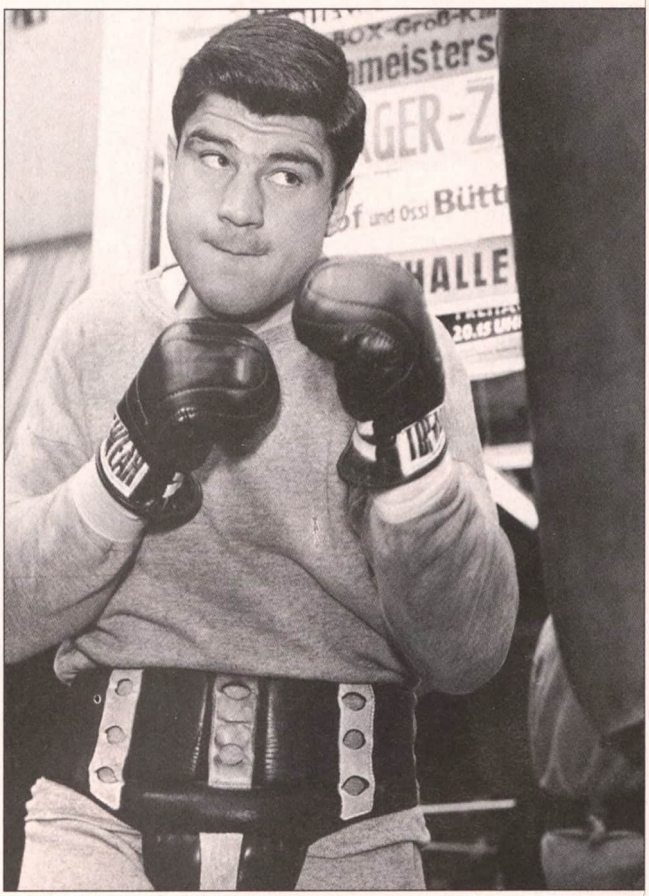
"Moreno, 28, only a shadow of his former self, took a bad lacing from Benitez. He was down in the first round for an eight-count. 'The Little Bird,' as he was known to his Mexican followers, staged a mild rally in the second. Benitez had the range, however, landing one solid blow after another. It was a left to the jaw, then a right to the body that sent Moreno to the floor. He took an eight-count, got up, then sat down again in surrender."



Cokes on the attack against Whitfield

Moreno had one more fight, lost, and retired. Oddly enough, Benitez was also pretty much finished. He went 2-2-2 in his next six starts and then joined Moreno in retirement.

"European Gossip" by J. A. Tree proves that Germany's current boxing boom is nothing new, when he notes that "14,000 fans paying 300,000 deutsch marks" turned out in Frankfort to see "Karl Mildenberger get off the canvas in round one, wipe out his opponent's two-point lead, and finish up a point ahead to save his European heavyweight crown (against Piero Tomasoni) in 15 rounds." ■



Mildenberger drew big crowds in Germany

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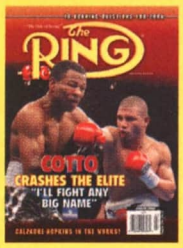

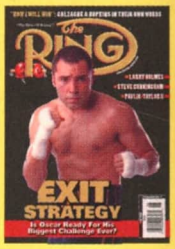

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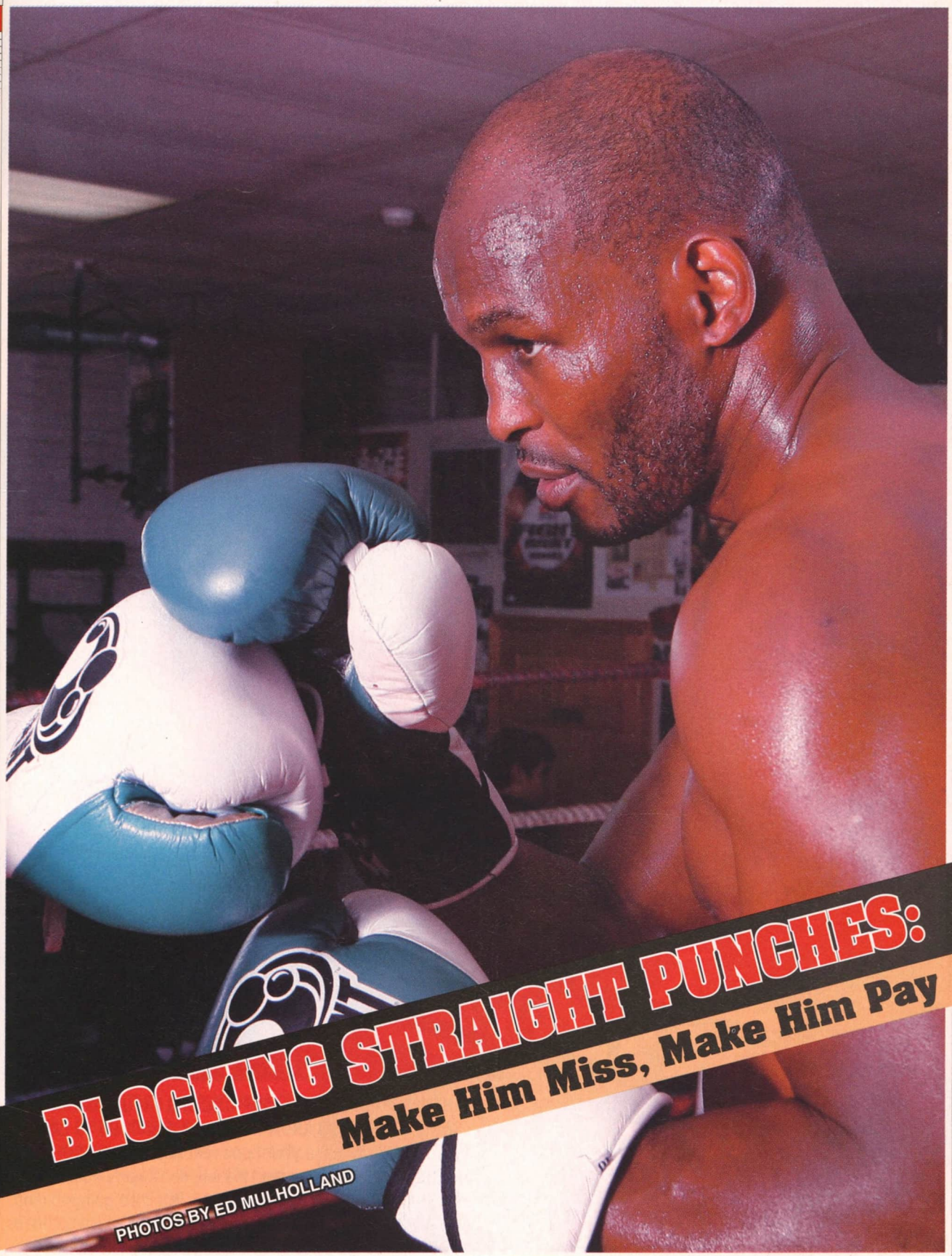
Boxing Lessons From A Living Legend

By Bernard Hopkins



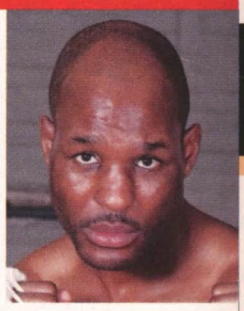
BLOCKING STRAIGHT PUNCHES:

Make Him Miss, Make Him Pay

PHOTOS BY ED MULHOLLAND

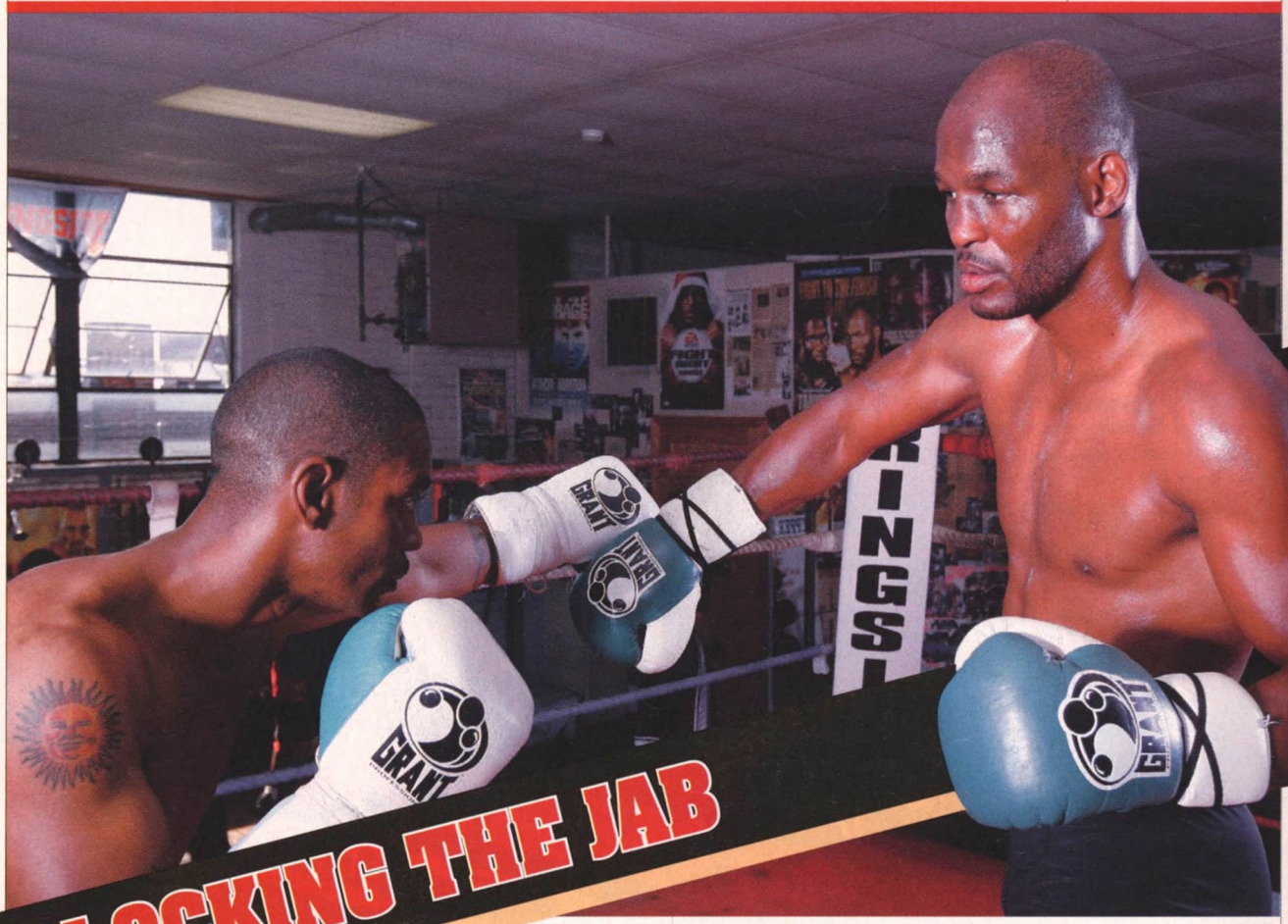
You have six defensive weapons in the ring: your head, your feet, your mind, and your hands. You use your head to slip and duck punches, your feet to move around the ring and get position, and your mind to outsmart your opponent. Your hands work defense too—by punching, which keeps your opponent from punching back, and by blocking his punches. Along with slipping punches, blocking accounts for most of your defense and prevents your opponent from doing what he wants to do, which is score punches. Blocking straight punches, like jabs and crosses, is a little different from blocking hooks and uppercuts. In this section we're going to discuss blocking straight punches only. Next issue we'll do hooks and uppercuts.

With any defensive move, the goal is to always be in position to punch. Whether you're pivoting, slipping, ducking, or blocking, you always want to be in position to punch once you've made your opponent miss. That's what you're in the ring to do. As you block your opponent's punch, you should already be thinking about what to hit him with. If you're blocking with the right hand, you're looking to come back with the left. If you're blocking with the left, you're looking for a spot to land the right. Every time he punches, he creates an opening for you to land. You block his shot, land your's. Make him miss, make him pay. Here, Danny Davis helps me show how.



BERNARD HOPKINS
Is the former middleweight and light heavyweight champion of the world.

(All photos taken at Andy Carr's Gym in Upper Darby, PA)

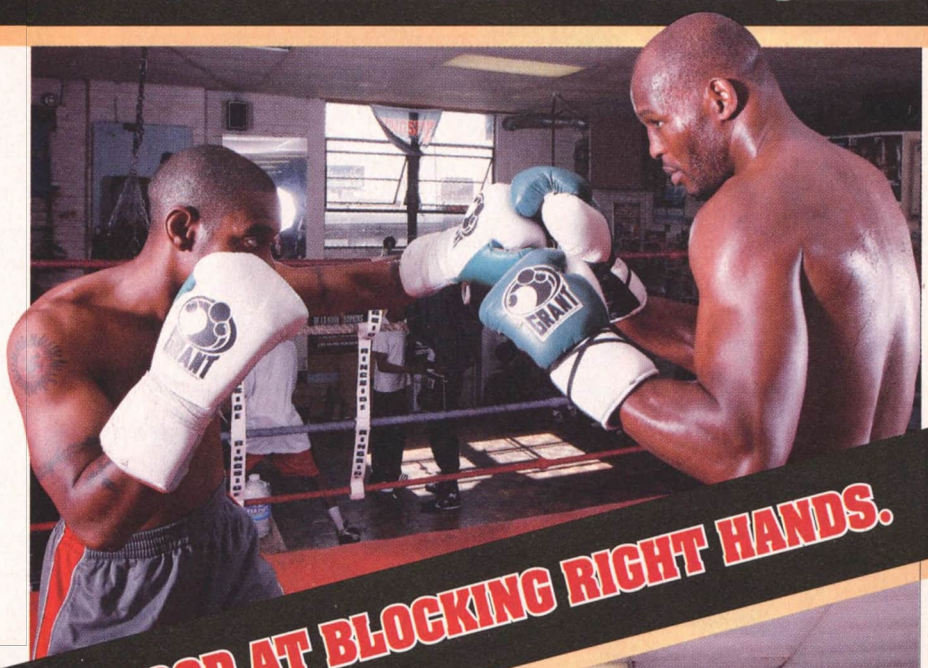


BLOCKING THE JAB

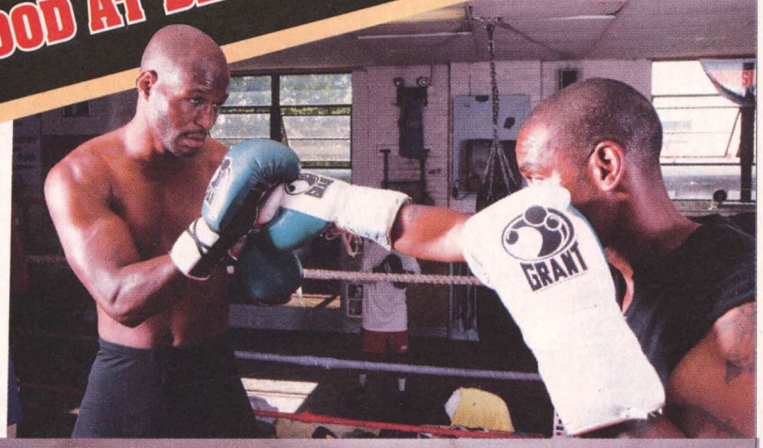
THE IMPORTANT THING ABOUT BLOCKING THE JAB IS THAT YOU SEE IT COMING AND KNOW IF IT'S CLOSE ENOUGH TO LAND. If you know how close your opponent has to be and you can tell he's too far away to land the jab, don't worry about blocking it. It's going to fall short anyway. But if it's going to land, just bring your right hand up to meet it. Don't reach out for it. Deflect it with your right hand and get ready to counter.

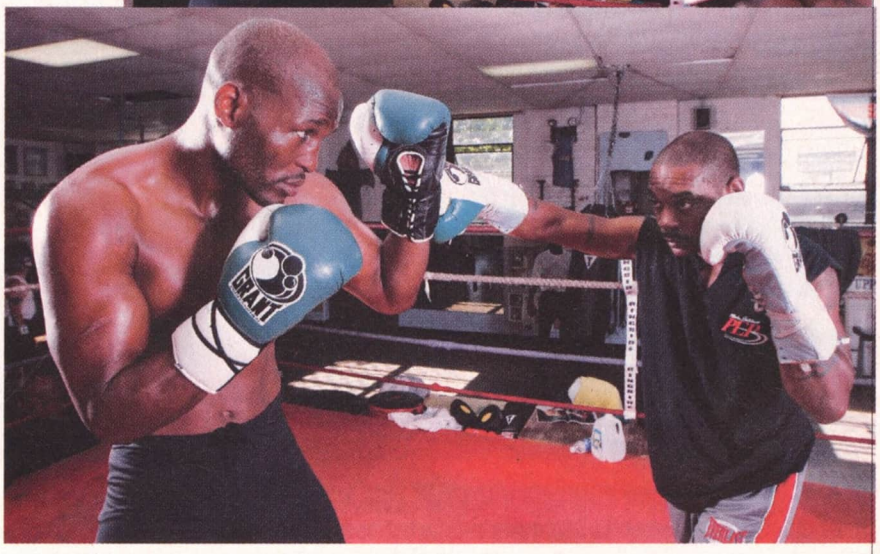
YOU CAN ALSO "CATCH" THE JAB

WATCH THE JAB COME IN AND WHEN IT GETS INTO YOUR RANGE, JUST CATCH IT. We call this the bat catcher. You keep your right glove just a little open, like a catcher does behind home plate, and when you block the jab you catch it so you can counter. You can even hold it there for a split second while you throw your own jab or a right hand over his jab. But never do the same thing all the time. Always keep your opponent guessing what you're going to do, on offense, and on defense.



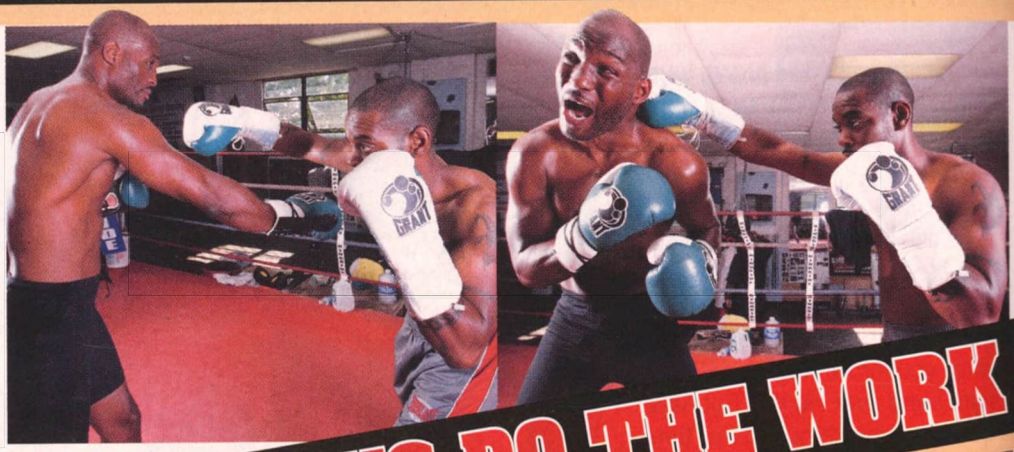
YOU'LL HAVE TO GET GOOD AT BLOCKING RIGHT HANDS.





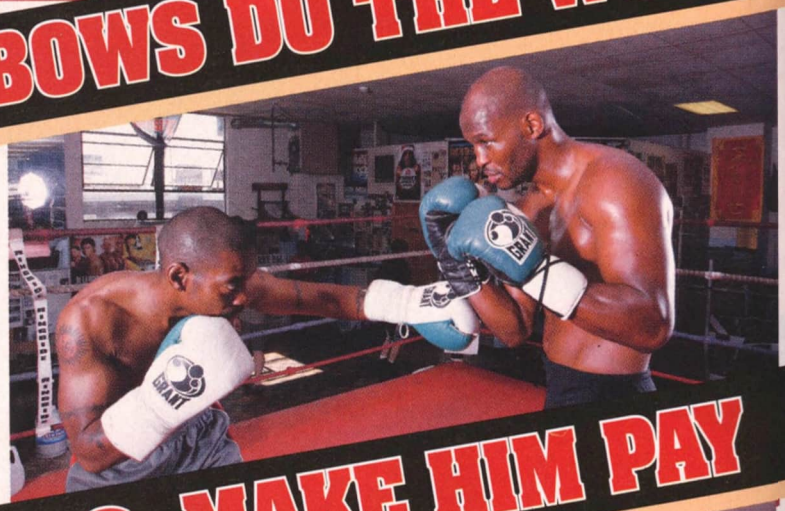
FOR MOST FIGHTERS IT'S THE FAVORED POWER PUNCH. You'll see a lot of them coming your way. You can block it one of two ways, using either your right hand or your left, depending on the angle your opponent is throwing it from. Here are both ways.

DON'T REACH FOR THE PUNCH; LET IT COME TO YOU



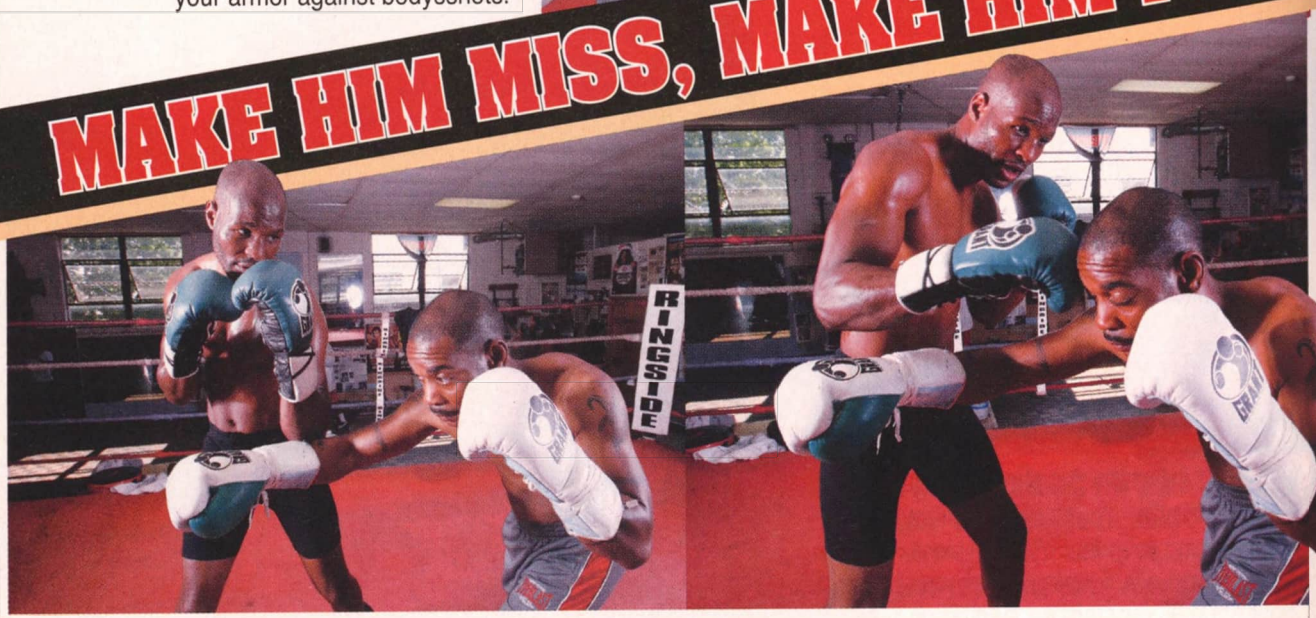
THIS IS THE WRONG WAY TO BLOCK THE RIGHT HAND. I'm anticipating it too much and reach out to block it instead of letting it come in. This allows my opponent to feint with the right, getting me to reach out for it. Then I'm open for the right hand that follows.

LET YOUR ELBOWS DO THE WORK



USE YOUR ELBOWS TO BLOCK THE JAB TO THE BODY, BUT AS ALWAYS, KEEP YOUR HANDS UP, YOUR CHIN DOWN AND YOUR EYES ON YOUR OPPONENT. This is why your elbows are always tucked and tight against the body. They're your armor against bodysshots.

MAKE HIM MISS, MAKE HIM PAY



THIS IS WHAT BLOCKING PUNCHES DOES FOR YOU. I block the right hand to the body and then pivot to my right. I do that for a reason: it sets up my own right hand to the head.

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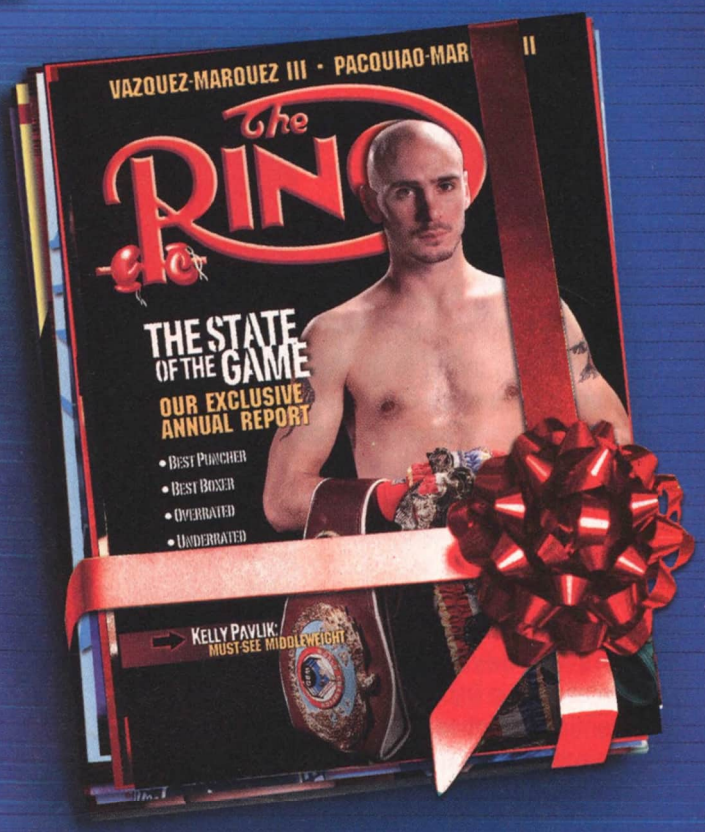

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By Margaret Goodman, M.D.

Research: The Key To The Future Of Boxing Safety

In 2001, when former IBF junior middleweight titleholder Vincent Pettway stepped into a Baltimore ring after a two-year absence to fight Luis Rosado, many observers knew he was "done" before he reached the ring apron. During ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* telecast, Pettway took a severe beating until he was TKO'd in round six.

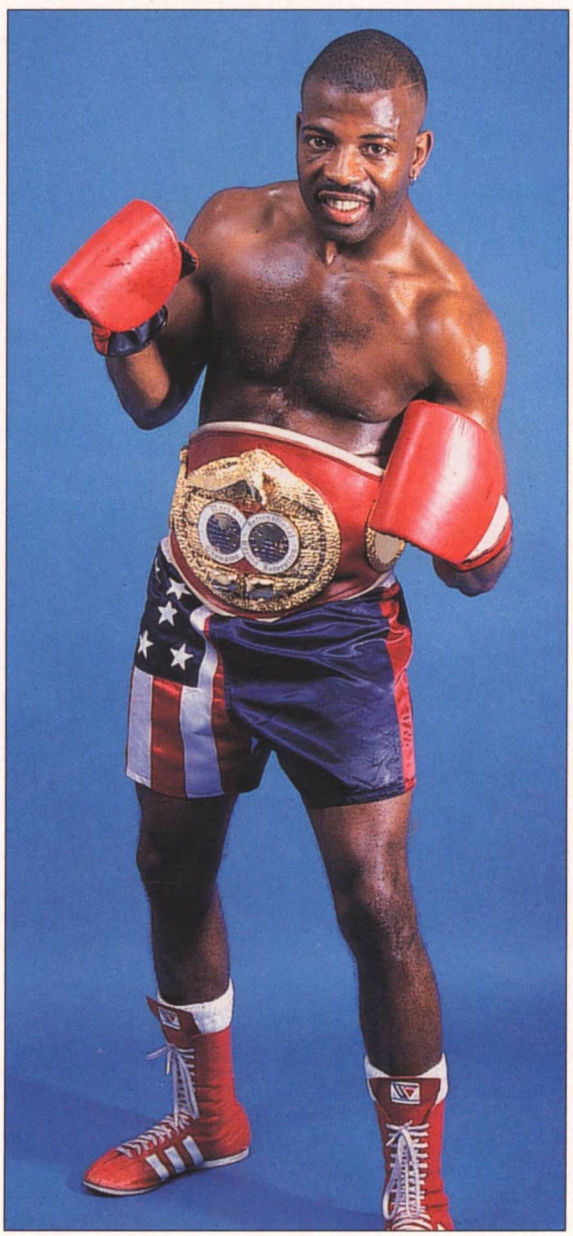
The Maryland State Athletic Commission then faced a difficult process in trying to do the right thing for a once-outstanding fighter whose best fighting days were behind him, which meant stopping Pettway's career before he reached a point of no return.

Studies repeatedly state that between 15 to 20 percent of boxers will develop Chronic Traumatic Brain Injury (CTBI) or dementia pugilistica. CTBI is a nonspecific syndrome of neurological dysfunction that is the result of chronic, repeated head trauma. Examples include famed boxers Floyd Patterson, Joe Louis, and Ray Robinson. But why did others escape the sport's ravages?

Regulatory bodies attempt to protect athletes through testing and better medical requirements. But the skeptics question if anyone really knows if these examinations will identify a fighter at risk?

The truth is that we don't.

With no grant money, university support, or donations, and few fighters having private health insurance, research has been all but a dream. That, however, is beginning to change.



Vincent Pettway in his prime as the IBF junior middleweight titleholder

Since November of 2003, the Maryland commission, with the support of the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, began a study of CTBI under the direction of neurologist Dr. John Stiller.

Dr. Stiller first became involved in boxing in the mid-1980s when the American Medical Association was attempting to ban combat sports. He later testified (and supported boxing) at a 1985 congressional subcommittee hearing. In 1999, Stiller met Alex Ramos, former boxer and head of the Retired Boxers Foundation, where they discussed the need to identify fighters at risk for CTBI. Soon after, Dr. Stiller met Patrick Pannella, the Maryland commission's executive director, and was invited to conduct research and become the commission's chief physician.

The study, which began in 2003, now includes 225 professional boxers who are followed on a yearly basis. The study looks to answer whether or not simple testing can determine which athletes are at risk for CTBI *and* if there is a window of opportunity when signs and symptoms indicate a boxer should cease competing.

"We realized when we designed the examination we didn't have much time. So we chose the weigh-in," said Stiller.

Maryland's weigh-ins are held the day before the fight. Fighters present for licensing have completed and passed their yearly physical requirements, which include a neurological exam.

Pannella then explains, in layman's terms, what the study is about. The four-part research exam takes approximately 15 minutes. It includes a 90-second neuropsychological test sensitive for brain damage, a balance test, a snout reflex (a pouting of closed lips when lightly tapped, which, when present, indicates brain damage), and a smell identification test.

A deteriorated sense of smell is a consistent sign in Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and dementia pugilistica. In this portion of the exam, boxers are blindly given items to smell, like chocolate, flowers, and turpentine.

Stiller notes, "The boxers I have examined with evidence of CTBI can smell, but they can't distinguish well between substances."

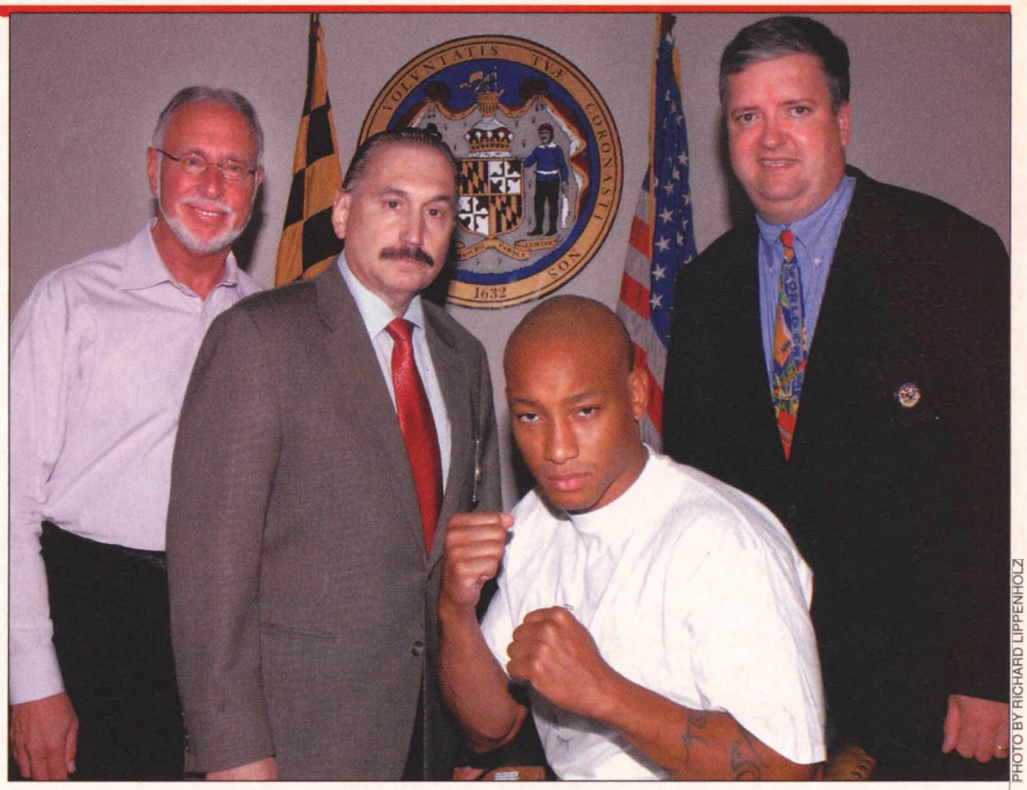


PHOTO BY RICHARD LIPPENHOLZ

Light heavyweight and CTBI Study participant Willie Williams poses with Maryland State Athletic Commission members (from left to right) Bruce C. Spizler, Dr. John Stiller, and Patrick Pannella

Yearly neurological examinations, required by many jurisdictions, can cost as much as $200 to $300. So, in exchange for their research involvement, boxers receive free evaluations by Dr. Stiller as long as they participate in the study.

According to Pannella, "The success of this study is directly, and ultimately, tied to a high level of trust formulated between boxers and the Maryland State Athletic Commission. It is important for the boxer to know that he or she is welcome to participate strictly as an anonymous volunteer." This information will not be used to suspend, revoke, or deny a fighter a license.

"The boxer is helping to provide data that may one day have a significant impact on the lives of all professional fighters," said Pannella. "We don't know what is going to happen to them in 10-20 years. We need a far-reaching broader view that what we are doing today will help the fighter. This is our legacy to make a change in the lives of boxers, and we hope other states will jump on board."

"To date, some of our preliminary results indicate that boxers who spar more frequently and intensely are more likely to have problems on our testing with balance and cognition," added Dr. Stiller. "Furthermore, boxers with more bouts and more years in the sport are more likely to have problems with their balance."

The Maryland study is reportedly the only ongoing study of its kind, but other research has brought forth conclusions regarding chronic injury.

In 1969, a published randomized study by Roberts looked at 224 retired boxers. Thirty-seven, or 17 percent, were affected, and 65 percent had mild cognitive problems compared to 35 percent with moderate to severe brain dysfunction. There was a significant correlation between occupational exposure (number of bouts and/or length of career) and the development of CTBI.

New York State Athletic Commission's Dr. Barry Jordan has been a forerunner in boxing research. In 1997, Dr. Jordan and others published a study in the *Journal Of The American Medical Association* that looked at genetic susceptibility of boxers to the effects of head trauma. Their preliminary conclusions suggested that the possession of a certain gene called APOE-4 might be associated with an increased risk of chronic brain injury in high-exposure boxers.

In 2007, Dr. Jordan et al. studied 19 boxers and eight non-boxers with brain positron emission tomography, a scan that looks at cerebral metabolism. The results showed this test was more sensitive than MRI and identified metabolic injuries similar to those seen in Alzheimer's.

Besides cost, the most difficult aspect of research is having accessible subjects. But boxing is a small community. A few thousand fighters travel to select jurisdictions yearly and are monitored by many of the same physicians. So it would be simple to share data for the common good in determining fitness to box.

Ceasing his career at the right time, Pettway has become a successful boxing trainer. If we are fortunate, research answers garnered by Maryland and others will enable all boxers to make a more informed decision regarding when it is time to hang up their gloves. ■

By Jim Bagg

Provision Quest

July 16, 2008, was supposed to be a great day for boxing. It was either going to be the day when lazy lard-ass James Toney (and imagine how fat and lazy you have to be for the Baggorama to call you that) bid an overdue farewell to boxing, or when perpetual disappointment Hasim Rahman accepted his station in life as a one-hit wonder who was never going to have a second hit. Toney and Rahman agreed—informally, at least—that whoever lost their rematch would call it a career. With Fox Sports televising, it was poised to be the "Best Damn Don't Let The Door Hit You In The Ass On The Way Out, Period." Ah, sweet mercy for us all.

Except there was one little problem: Nobody lost. Yeah, initially Rahman did, by TKO, but it was eventually changed to a no-contest, and even if it had remained a TKO, it was inconclusive and controversial and there was no way in hell "The Rock" was waving goodbye under those circumstances.

But you have to admit, the idea of a "loser must retire" match was kind of fun. It would have been more fun if it had been worked into the fight contract, and also if somebody had lost the fight, but in theory, it added an element of intrigue to the fight. It mixed things up. It lent meaning to a bout between two over-the-hill shlubs in a hopeless division.

And it got the Baggnanimous thinking about other "special stipulation" fights he'd like to see. It's time for promoters and matchmakers to get a little more creative, and the Baggatouille is going to be nice enough to give them a push in the right direction by sharing a few of the brilliant ideas only his mind could conceive:

Evander Holyfield vs. Mike Tyson, Winner Takes All: If it's true that Holyfield is having trouble keeping up on child support payments and that Tyson ran out of cash before he could complete his facial tattoo, then why not get these two heavyweight superstars together for a third time with the entire purse up for grabs? Sadly, they could probably still sell a few hundred thousand PPVs together. You might be able to get $10- or $15-million in the pot for this fight. Wouldn't you have to watch, knowing the winner gets the money he desperately needs and the loser gets absolutely nothing (except for a beating)? Actually, with this winner-take-all provision generating interest in the fight, there might be $20- or $25-million on the line when all is said and done.

Sure, Tyson's a quitter. But he's never made a $20-million decision to quit. This would be a great way to find out just how low his breaking point really is.

(And it's also the fight that Tyson's lawyers and Holyfield's baby-mommas most want to see.)

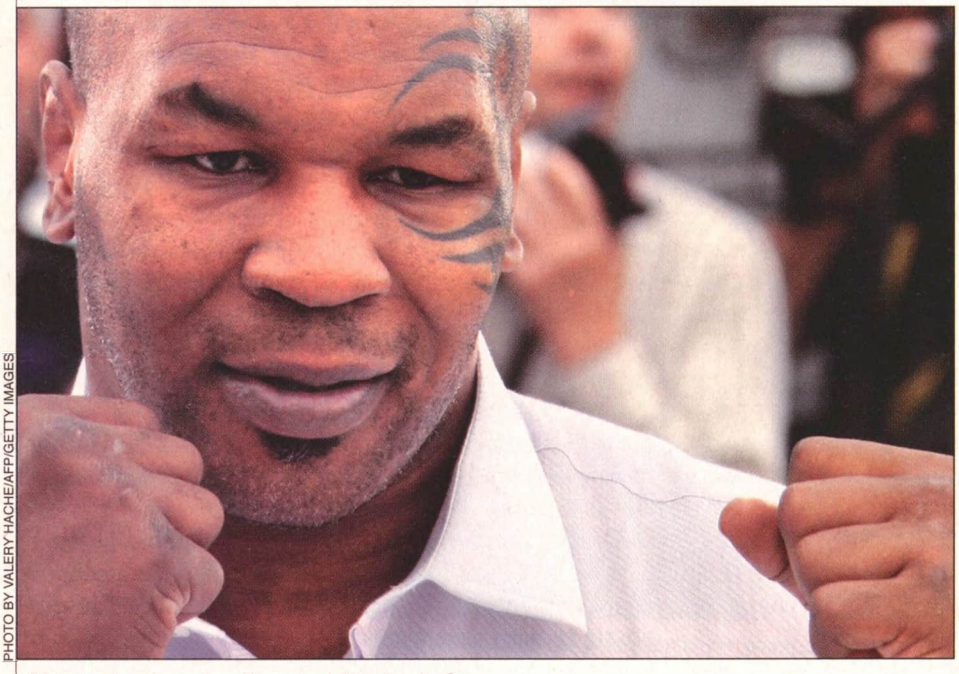


PHOTO BY VALERY HACHE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Will Bagg's scheme lure Tyson back into the ring?

Antonio Margarito vs. Librado Andrade, Loaded Gloves Match: As Miguel Cotto learned the hard way, Margarito has a jaw that came off an assembly line in Detroit, and the caveman-like Andrade ranks only a half-notch below him in the "best chins in boxing" debate. These guys look most of the time like they can't be hurt—at least not by mere fists inside of boxing gloves.

But what if they both did the ol' Jack Dempsey plaster of paris trick? Or snuck horseshoes into their mitts? (Mini-horseshoes, obviously.) Then we'd have a fight, complete with guys staggering around the ring,

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

IBHOF guarantee on the line in Vazquez-Marquez IV

maybe some knockdowns, perhaps even a stoppage. There just isn't enough drama for the Baggomatic when two fighters are incapable of hurting each other, and the loaded-gloves stipulation is the solution.

And yes, the world's greatest boxing columnist is well aware that Margarito is a welterweight and Andrade is a super middleweight. So we'll let Margarito wear eight-ounce gloves around the foreign objects, while Andrade wears 10-ouncers.

Israel Vazquez vs. Rafael Marquez, Hall Of Fame Guarantee Match: Not that Vazquez-Marquez IV needs anything extra to make it appealing, but wouldn't it perk you up a little bit more if the International Boxing Hall of Fame got inventive, circumvented their usual induction rules, and promised that the winner of the fight would get automatic entry into Canastota? If you thought round 12 of the third fight was compelling, how about a furious finish like that with boxing immortality on the line?

Somewhat diminishing this fine proposal from the Baggapotamus is the distinct likelihood that both Vazquez and Marquez are headed for the IBHOF anyway. But there's a difference between "likely" and "guaranteed." Ed Brophy, do your part to make Vazquez-Marquez IV the mega-event it deserves to be.

Oh, and Gary Shaw, you can do your part too by adding the special stipulation that tickets go on sale more than two weeks before the fight.

Sam Peter vs. Chris Arreola, Someone's "Nightmare" Has Got To Go: Unusual provision or not, Peter-Arreola is probably the most promising action fight the heavyweight division has to offer, espe-

One "Nightmare" too many

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Bagg envisions Alcazar's return ... at least for one round

cially between 27-year-old whippersnappers. But one thing we can't have is two 27-year-old heavyweight contenders both calling themselves "Nightmare." With all of the available nicknames in the world, it simply isn't acceptable to have these guys sharing one, so the loser of this fight gives up his monicker.

And how's this for a great twist: The winner gives the loser his new nickname, and the loser has to use it for at least one fight. So if Peter wins, he can randomly decide afterward that Arreola's new nickname is "Mr. Potato Head," and then for his next fight, Michael Buffer would introduce him as "Chris ... Mr. Potato Heaaaaad ... Arreolaaaaa!" And if Arreola wins, he can have some fun with Peter's last name and brand him as "You Need A Microscope To See My" or something like that.

Julio Diaz vs. David Diaz, Loser Loses His Surname: Building off the someone-loses-his-nickname concept, let's take it a step farther and make a fighter change his last name. For several years now, we've had too many Diazes running around at lightweight. Since Juan already beat Julio in 2007, he's exempt from this competition, leaving Julio vs. David in a battle to keep the Diaz name.

Again, the winner ought to pick the loser's new surname. It could be something that just doesn't fit ... like Julio Greenberg. Or maybe something that fits a little too well ... like David Archuleta. The possibilities are endless.

Krszystof Wlodarczyk vs. Ola Afolabi, Teddy Atlas Special: There is no stipulation regarding the *fighters* in this battle of contending cruiserweights; rather, the stipulation is that Teddy Atlas must broadcast the fight, and he must do so on his own, with no partner, leaving him to do blow-by-blow *and* color and butcher these names in new and hilarious ways every five seconds.

From the moment he goes into the "Fight Plan" and tells Saul Avelar, "Okay, you be Woldarski and I'll be Alofaba," it's going to be riveting television. Let's just hope Ferdie Pacheco is tuned in that night to play along at home.

Oscar De La Hoya vs. TBA, Musical Trainers Match: Whoever De La Hoya faces in his "retirement" fight, wouldn't it be fascinating to watch the endless parade of men who've trained Oscar during his pro career work his corner, a different guru advising him with each passing between-rounds break?

De La Hoya's old amateur trainer, Al Stankie, could be the man in his ear between rounds one and two. After round two, De La Hoya could ignore the advice of Robert Alcazar. After round three, it's Jesus "The Professor" Rivero telling Oscar to focus on defense, and that would be followed by Emanuel Steward telling him after round four to be more aggressive. Oscar's dad could then kick Steward out of the corner so Gil Clancy could take over after round five, followed by Floyd Mayweather Sr. reciting poetry to De La Hoya after round six. After round seven against Manny Pacquiao, Freddie Roach could switch corners—and presumably tell "The Golden Boy" to stand still with his hands at his sides so "Pac-Man" could knock him out—and if the fight goes past seven, they could start the rotation over again.

And of course, there'd be a thrilling seven-man battle royal afterward to determine who gets the trainer's cut of Oscar's massive paycheck.

Are We Singing Or Fighting?

The Margarito-Cotto pay-per-view reminded the Bagg-stealer of a point he's been meaning to make for a while: There is entirely too much time wasted on these shows listening to entirely too many national anthems. In this case, the start of the main event was delayed by about 10 minutes so that we could hear the anthems of Puerto Rico, Mexico, and the United States. Unless it's Marilyn Monroe singing in her "Happy birthday, Mr. President" voice, these musical interludes add nothing to the Baggamundo's viewing pleasure.

The Monthly Mailbagg

The Baggaloola's column in the September issue about boxing broadcasters stirred up a fair amount of e-mail, so here's a small taste of what you, the commoners, had to say about the subject:

Nice job on the commentary of boxing broadcasting people. That was some funny stuff, my friend. I've always wanted somebody to write an article on these folks and rip them, especially Lamps. I think you could have ripped 'em even further, but I understand you want to keep your job in the back pages of RING.

For some reason, I root for Lennox to do a good job, but. unfortunately, I cringe. Also, Max Kellerman's eyes creep me out. They are way too blue and bug-eyed when the camera is that close up on his face.

Tommy Salami

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Max creeps out processed meat

Mr. Processed Meat,

Just a couple of quick words of advice: Close your eyes when Kellerman comes on the screen, and plug up your ears when Lewis appears.

And don't worry, the Bagglona Sandwich won't be losing his job in the back pages of THE RING anytime soon. Nigel Collins and the Baggster were out drinking not too long ago, and the esteemed editor-in-chief's loose lips revealed where the bodies are buried.

Ah, blackmail. It's not just a word to describe the sort of fighters HBO's "racist" commentators are biased against.

Baggmeister,

Just read your article on the TV commentators. I'm shocked you didn't include Jim Gray. He is singlehandedly the worst of them all, hands down. I always find it amazing that the fighters he interviews don't kick his ass right there on the spot!

Jason

Jason,

"The Rude Dude Of Interviews" wasn't included in the column because he isn't really a commentator, but your assessment is spot on. Someday, some crazy, angry fighter is going to snap and give Gray what he deserves.

The Barf-Bagg nominates him for the Ike Ibeabuchi live prison interview.

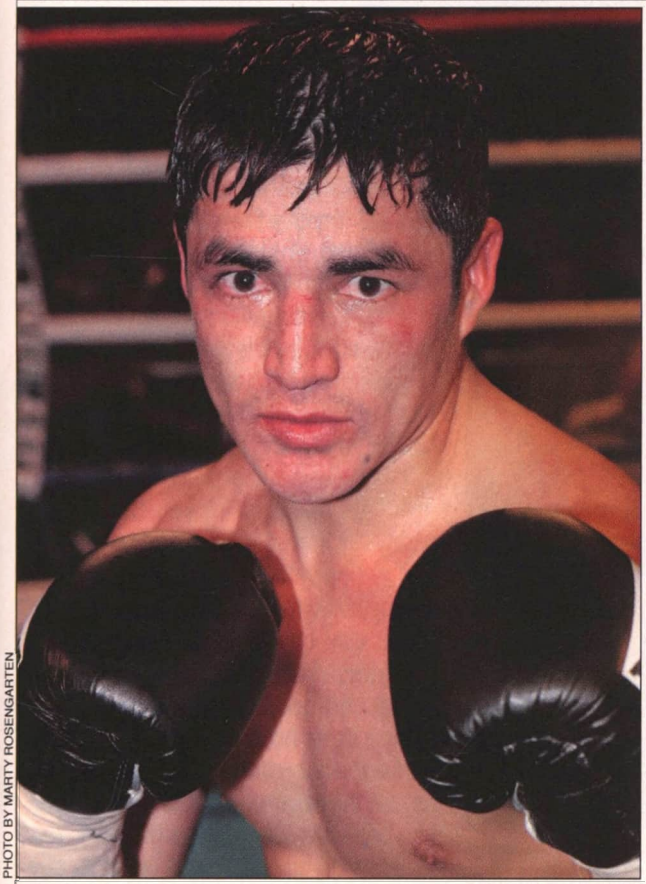


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Vinan snags The Stingray

One national anthem is already one too many, since there is no logical connection between sports and these songs. So three national anthems is triply unacceptable. Here are two possible solutions: First, how about one singer just doing a brief medley of maybe the best 30 seconds of each song? And second (and this is the one the Bagglestar Galactica would choose), how about if all three singers do their thing at the same time, battling to scream over top of one another? This is boxing, after all. Preceding the main event with a vocal fight makes perfect sense.

And The Stingray Goes To ...

Carlos Vinan, a Newark, New Jersey-based Ecuadorian, who brought a crappy 7-6-3 (1) record into his July bout with unbeaten 19-year-old prospect Andrew Cancio, and looked for half of the fight like one of those "too tough for his own good" opponents—until he knocked Cancio down and rallied to hand him his first loss in nine pro fights, via majority decision. Vinan ended a six-fight winless streak with the upset win and showed that sometimes you can be too tough for the other guy's good.

In fact, that would make a fine motto to start printing on these Stingray awards: "Too tough for the other's guy good." Carlos, you'll be the first to receive a Stingray with that motto engraved. Would you like yours shipped to Newark or Ecuador? ■

Jim Bagg can be reached at Baggmeister@yahoo.com.

[Come Out Writing]

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, THE RING, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

Margarito-Cotto Commentary

After having just witnessed the most dramatic welterweight fight since the first Ray Leonard-Thomas Hearns bout, I think the late Jim Croce summed it up best:

You don't tug on Superman's cape.

You don't spit into the wind.

You don't pull the mask off the old Lone Ranger,

And you don't mess around with Antonio Margarito.

JEFF BOLLINGER
jffbollinger@yahoo.com

Miguel Cotto should feel no shame in losing to Antonio Margarito. Cotto landed enough powerpunches to knock down a two-story house. No welterweight in history could have stood in there and took that kind of a beating and kept coming like Margarito. His drive and will to win are unbelievable and his ability to take a punch is insane. I don't think the loss to Margarito diminishes Cotto's stature at all. He is still a great fighter and I think between him and Margarito, stylistically, Cotto is a better match up for Floyd Mayweather, who, everyone knows, is not finished yet.

JEREMY GUERRIERI
Cleveland, OH

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

THE RING was inundated with letters and e-mails about the Antonio Margarito-Miguel Cotto fight, all of which praised the sensational bout and the two fighters. But there was also lots of negative feedback concerning the HBO's ringside commentators, who many readers felt did a poor job.

Congrats to Antonio Margarito on a well-deserved win over Miguel Cotto. Margarito outworked him from the beginning and was able to press all the action. It is my candidate for Fight of the Year, over Israel Vazquez-Rafael Marquez III.

However, I have never heard such bad TV commentary. Jim Lampley, Emanuel Steward, and Max Kellerman were talking only about Cotto and how he was landing the effective punches. Also, HBO only showed replays between rounds of the good shots Cotto landed, instead of the many Margarito connects. They never gave Margarito any credit for his tenacity and ability to set the pace of the fight. I had Margarito winning by a wide margin.

ADAM McCLURE
Chicago, IL

I'm happy for Antonio Margarito. I admit that I thought Miguel Cotto would win. I was, however, rooting for Margarito. That puts him at the top of the action-packed welterweight division. It does not, however, make Margarito the world welterweight champion, as the retards at HBO would have you believe.

Why do they always refer to the alphabet straps as world titles? You

would think they could see the absurdity in having more than one belt to distinguish the champion from the contenders. Obviously, HBO's pockets are too full with puppet money for them to even care about the integrity of the sport. If it were up to me, I would have them all slapped across the face with a smelly fish for their blatant disregard of an honest championship policy such as the one THE RING has in place.

RICHARD REYES
27_rarereyes@att.net

Margarito-Cotto was everything true fight fans could have asked for, and more. However, why in the world did Cotto completely abandon his body-punching game? Cotto is one of the most formidable bodypunchers in boxing, but he did nothing but throw punches at Margarito's head the whole fight, which was about as effective as throwing water balloons at an oncoming Mack truck.

TOM J. WRIGHT
Oakland, CA

Racism: A Two-Way Street

I agree with Kelly Pavlik's comments on reverse prejudice in the Fall 2008 issue ("THE RING Interview"). I can identify with Pavlik when he says, "I had guys in the amateurs purposely go after me because I was the white kid. The attitude was the white kid couldn't fight." As a white guy who fought in the amateurs, I can say this is totally true. I experienced the exact same thing. Quite often, I was one of a few, if not the only white guy in the gym and the prejudice was real. However, once I climbed in the ring and displayed some talent, and more importantly heart, that prejudice usually faded. I realized that this is just the way it is and rarely did I get pissed off at the "racial thing" in the gym.

But what did and still does piss me off is the stereotypical way the other whites in the gym viewed me. As Pavlik says, "There is still a lot of stupidity out there." Yeah, and the stupidity comes from goofballs who assumed that I was just another clumsy, slow, non-athletic white guy like themselves. The least amount of respect I was shown in the gym was by other white fighters and trainers. They always had some ignorant comment to make, and just as guilty of the white-kid-can't-fight attitude as anyone else—maybe more so!

BRAD RUSSO
New York, NY

Misguided Management

In light of your article about managing boxers in the September 2008 issue ("Guiding Plight: The Five Best & Worst Managed Fighters In The Game"), I read a tidbit today that had me in stitches. Bob Arum claimed Winky Wright turned down an offer of nearly $1.2-million to fight against Kelly Pavlik. In THE RING's article, you noted that Wright claims to have his sights set on huge names. So when I hear he's turning down a fight against "The Ghost," one of those few boxers with real crossover appeal, I've got to wonder how many great chances like this Mr. Wright plans to pass up.

Does the middleweight division have any bigger names than Pavlik right now? Given that Winky hasn't fought in more than a year, how is it possible that he'd turn down more than a million dollars and a chance to win THE RING, WBC, and WBO titles? Clearly, all those blows to the head have made Winky delusional.

ENRIQUE FERNANDEZ ROBERTS
enrique.fernandezroberts@mailhouse.gov

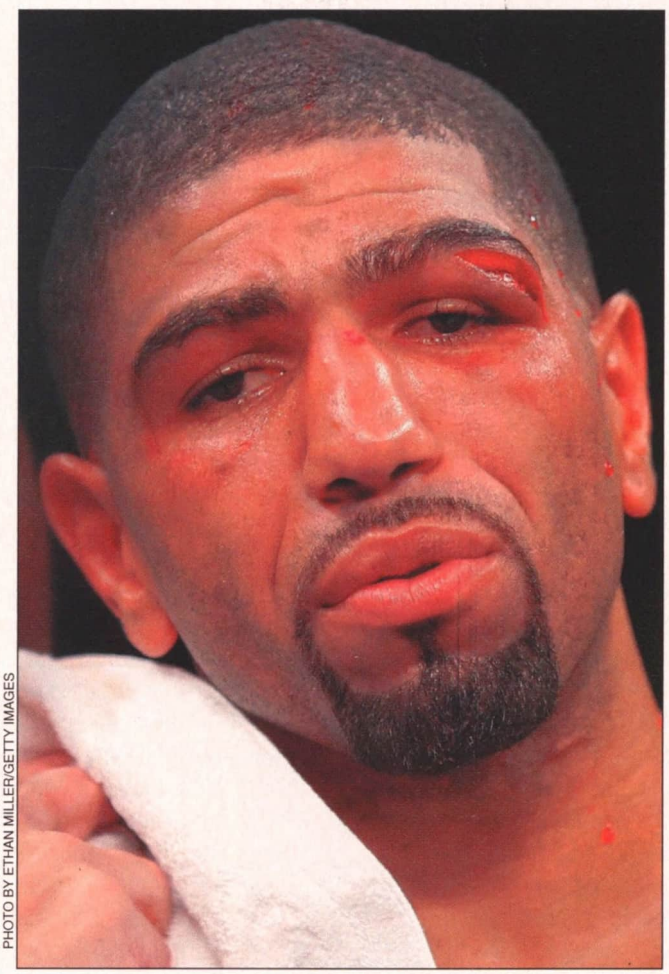


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Winky Wright has not fought since his loss to Bernard Hopkins in July 2007, which prompted reader Enrique Fernandez Roberts to wonder how Wright could turn down a lucrative offer to fight Kelly Pavlik.

What's The Difference?

What is the danger of the infamous "rabbit punch" to the back of the head? I suppose it is brain damage, but why is it different from a hit to any part of the head?

MICK COYNE
Walnut Creek, CA

Editor's note: According to Dr. Margaret Goodman, MD: "The structure and thickness of the skull is not uniform. For example, many experts believe blows to the temple can produce the most damage because the brain is most vulnerable and exposed, as the skull has less thickness in that area. 'Rabbit punches' have also been considered an increased risk due to accessibility to the brainstem and spinal cord. The brainstem controls breathing, eye and facial movements, and consciousness and should be protected from direct or indirect injury." ■

Looking Ahead

By Joseph Santoliquito

The Curiosity Factor

Vitali Klitschko has become a major curiosity to both fight fans—and himself. Almost four years removed from his last fight, we're interested to see if he's still a viable world-class heavyweight. And, if he's to be honest with himself, so is he. Hopefully, that question will be answered when Vitali meets WBC titleholder **Samuel Peter** on Showtime, October 11, from the O2 World Arena in Berlin, Germany.

This is a fight that *has* to come with a disclaimer, since no one knows for certain whether or not it will actually happen. Klitschko calls himself "Dr. Ironfist," but the rest of his body has repeatedly failed him. Injuries to his back, knees, and shoulders have lead to numerous postponements and cancellations.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Klitschko rams a jab into Williams' face

The string of injuries eventually forced Klitschko to announce his retirement in 2005. In '07, he attempted to make a comeback against **Jameel McCline**, but a back injury in training scuttled those plans.

Klitschko claims to be healthy, but any reasonable observer would have reason to be skeptical. The truth is, even if Klitschko, 35-2 (34), can get through the rest of training camp unscathed, we have no idea what he will bring to the ring against Peter. Yes, Vitali fought very well the last time he was in the ring, knocking down **Danny Williams** four times before the fight was stopped in the eighth round. But that was December 11, 2004, a lifetime ago for a 37-year-old injury-prone heavyweight.

Based on what Klitschko was able to do in his prime, he'll try to use his jab to create distance, and then begin hammering away at Peter's suspect chin with powershots. But we don't know if Klitschko is capable of doing that for a prolonged period of time, nor do we know if his body will betray him during the fight. Moreover, Klitschko is making a huge leap back into boxing without benefit of a tune-up fight to gauge what his body can endure.

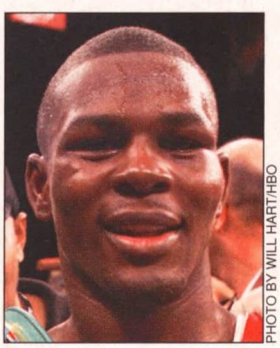


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

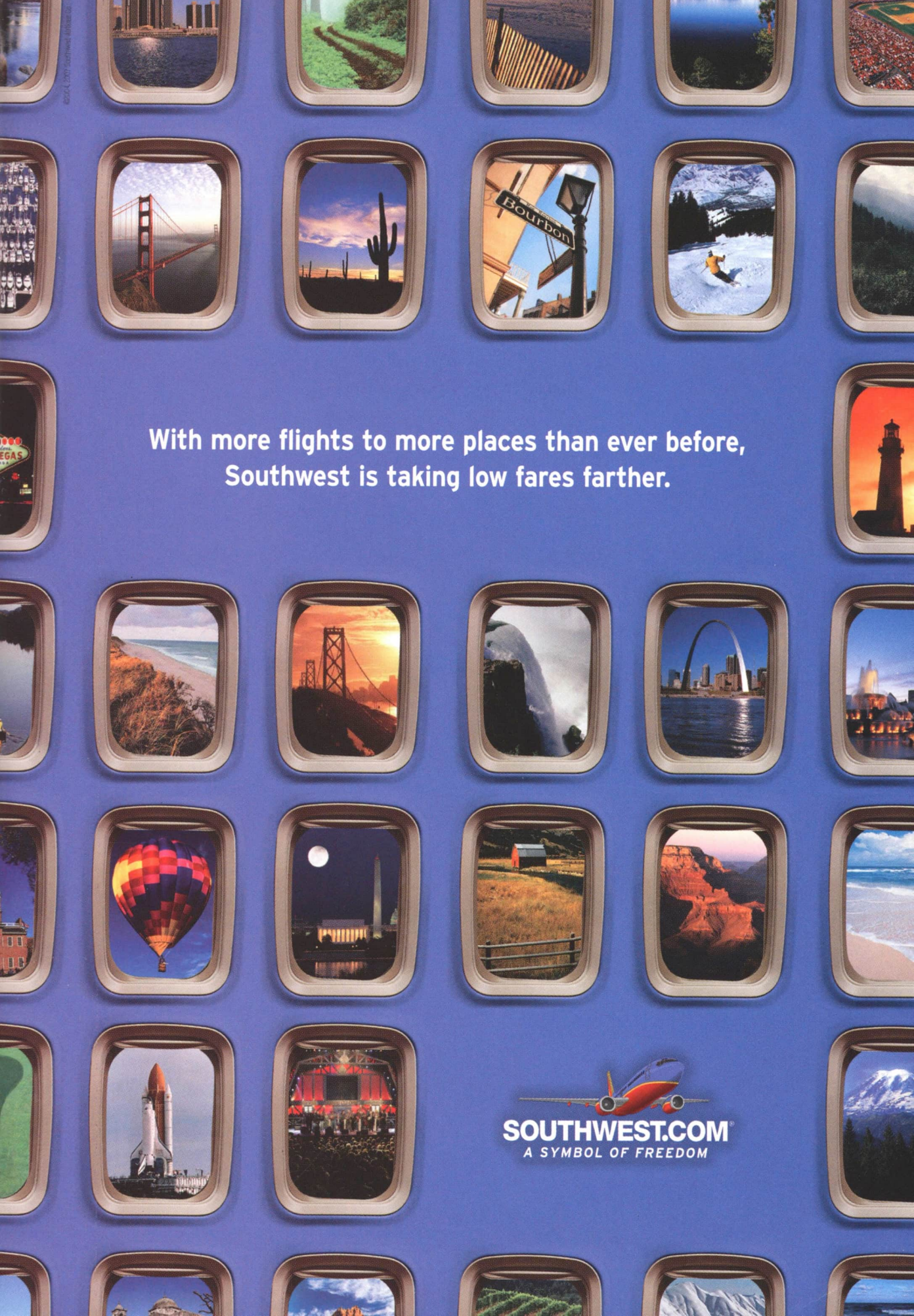
Taylor in must-win situation

Despite his reputation as a big puncher, Peter, 30-1 (23), has stopped only one opponent in the last two years, finishing a creaky **Oleg Maskaev** in the sixth round to win the WBC title in March. Typically, the Nigerian rumbles forward behind an improved left jab, looking to land his thumping overhand right. But Peter was wobbled by Vitali's younger brother, **Wladimir Klitschko**, in the only loss of his career, and journeyman **Jameel McCline** floored him three times in October 2007.

Vitali has a sturdier chin than Wladmir, but it's one thing to get hit wearing headgear in the gym, another altogether getting nailed by Peter's granite fists in a real bout. After four years away from the ring, will Vitali be able to withstand Peter's pressure and punching power? Or will his body break down before we get a chance to find out?

Listen Up

At one time, it seemed superstar status was likely for both **Jermain Taylor**, 27-2-1 (17), and **Jeff Lacy**, 24-1 (17), as their pro careers blossomed. Taylor became world middleweight champion by beating **Bernard Hopkins** in July 2005, and Lacy claimed the IBF super middleweight title by beating **Syd Vanderpool** in October 2004. But then things began to fall apart. Twice **Kelly Pavlik** beat Taylor, and Lacy took what appears to have been a career-changing beating from **Joe Calzaghe**. On November 15, Taylor and Lacy will face each other in a crossroads fight on HBO, at a site yet to be determined when this issue went to press. The loser of the super middleweight bout could be banished to gatekeeper status, while the winner would buoy his floundering career. Taylor looked better in his rematch against Pavlik, albeit in another losing effort. Lacy, meanwhile, has tallied a trio of wins since the Calzaghe catastrophe, but struggled each time ... IBF super middleweight titlist **Lucian Bute**, 22-0 (18), will make his second title defense, against **Librado Andrade**, 27-1 (27), on October 24, at Montreal's Bell Centre. With the fighters' contrasting styles, this has the potential to be a fun fight. Bute is a boxer who's not afraid to mix it up, while Andrade walks in winging bombs ... Following his upset victory over **Giovanni Lorenzo** in June, **Raul Marquez** will be rewarded with a title shot against IBF middleweight beltholder **Arthur Abraham**, October 4, at Jako-Arena in Bayern, Germany. The savvy, hard-hitting Abraham, 28-0 (23), will be heavily favored over the 36-year-old, cut-prone Marquez, who will take a 41-3-1 (27) record into what figures to be his final shot at a title. ■



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